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PROBLEMS IN ETHICS

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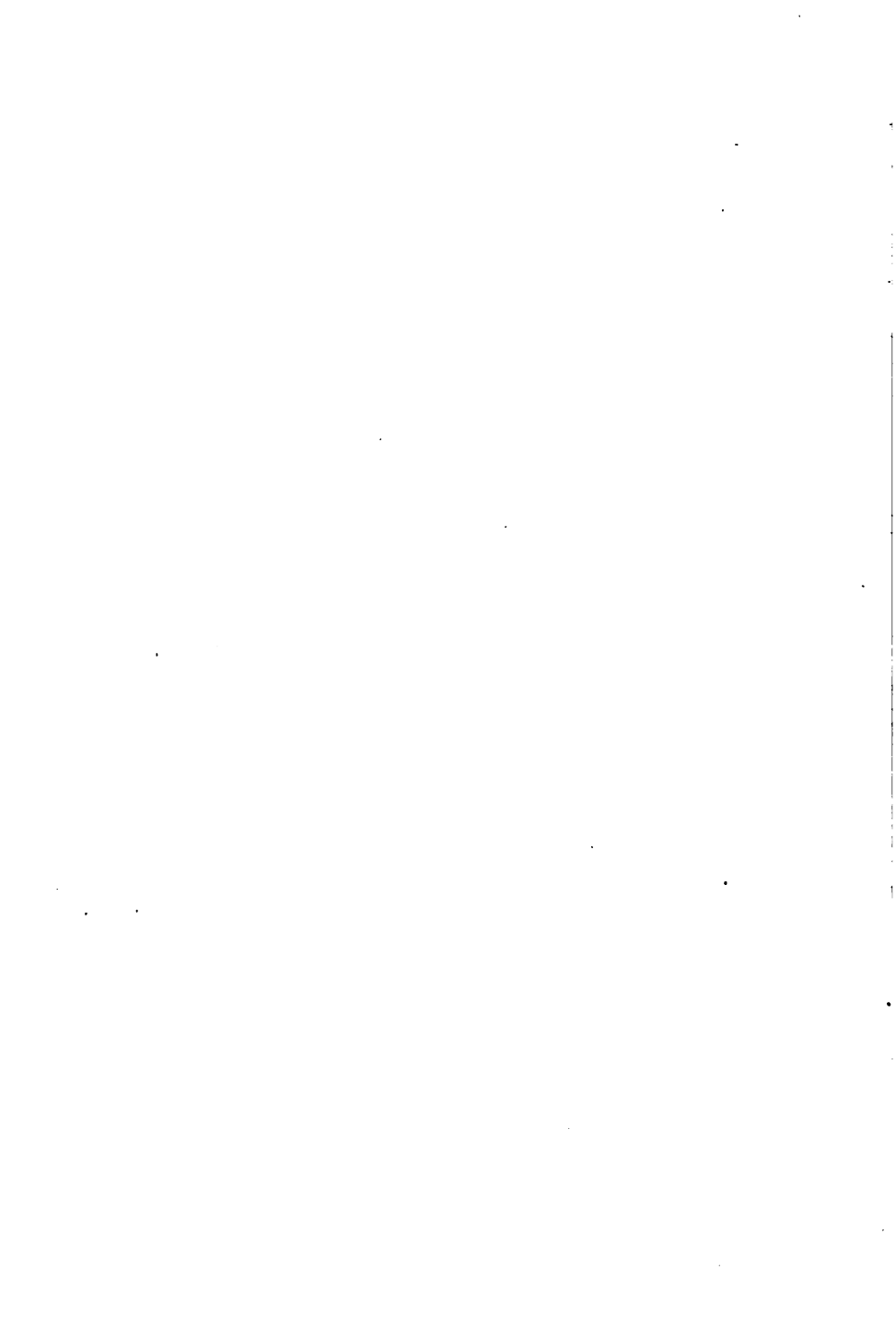
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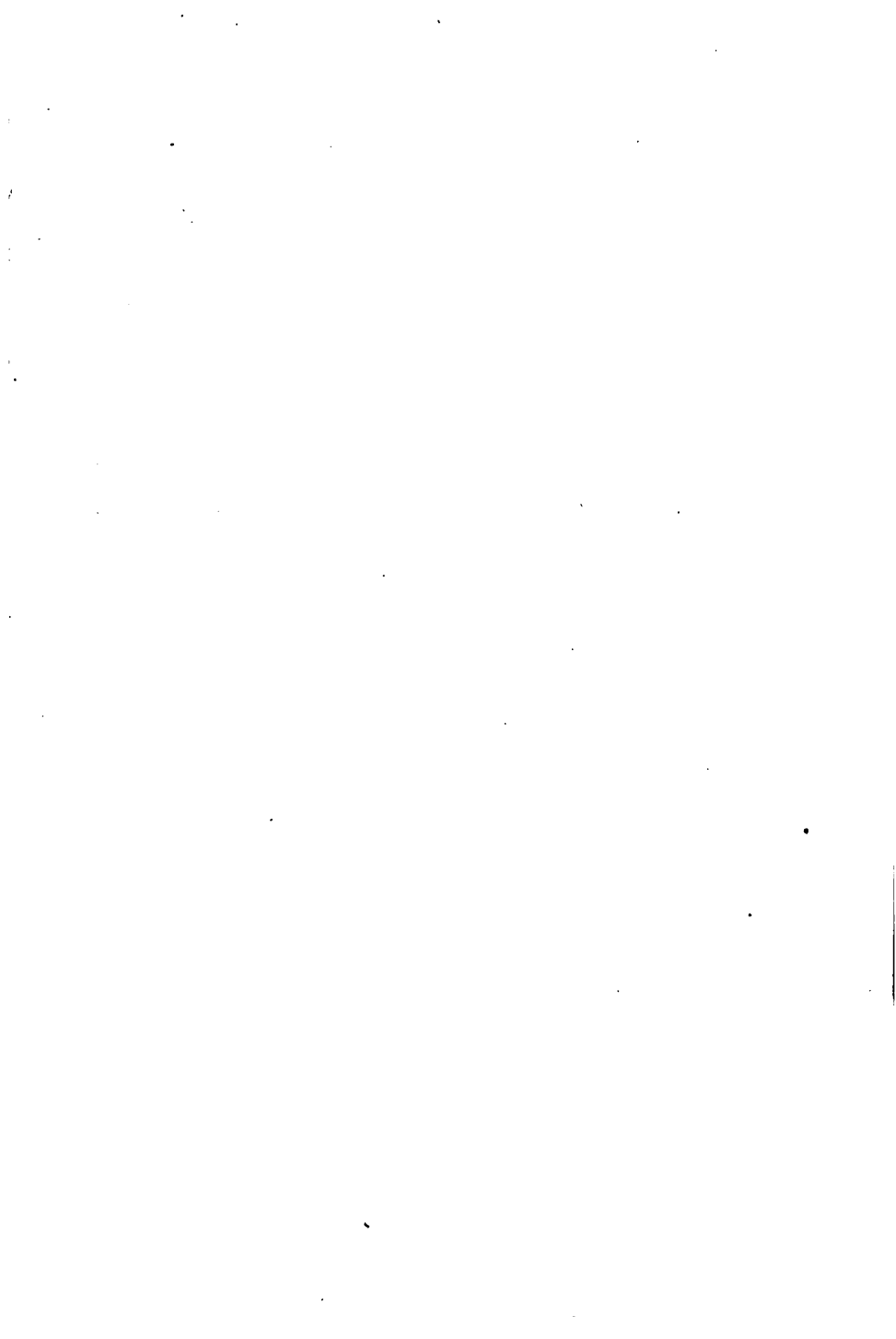
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PROBLEMS IN ETHICS

OR

FOUNDATIONS FOR A CODE OF RULES
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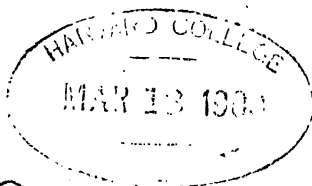
JOHN STEINFORT KEDNEY

AUTHOR OF "THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUBLIME," "HEGEL'S ÆSTHETICS"
"CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE HARMONIZED," "MENS CHRISTI"

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PREFACE

THE author of the following treatise has been occupied, at intervals, during his whole mature life in accumulating material for the composition of a work on Formal Ethics, which should also furnish a guide for the solution of the questions of Material Ethics, with the hope that the satisfactory establishment of the fundamental postulates of the science would at length compel recognition and acquiescence; and thus, the end of all moral activity being determined, whatever guides are possible to decide questions of duty might be furnished. But while a stock of material has been gathered, the composition of the work has been deferred, owing to the pressure of professional duties, the anxiety to keep *au courant* with all contemporary contributions to the philosophy and the science, in order to discover whether work had been already done which need not be repeated; and also because the author has moved aside several times for the composition of other treatises, which themselves would have a bearing upon the subject-matter of this one, which he intended should be the main effort of his life.

Thus the early discovery that the moral ideal is also an æsthetic ideal led him to investigate the philosophy of Æsthetics. If this should be found

to support an ethical system erected upon independent grounds, the argument for the truth of the latter would receive additional support. Also, the author was occupied for some years in the composition of a theological work, of which there seemed to be need in the existing confusion of thought concerning Christian doctrine, and because he was convinced that in order to establish the rules of Material Ethics upon the firmest possible grounds, it is needful that Christian Dogmatics shall take its place in the inquiry,—that this, from its very rationality, has a claim that cannot be successfully disputed, nor should be shunned. Thus, only towards the close of his life does the author find himself at leisure to write what he intended should be his main literary work; and he now feels that he has too little prospect of prolonged life, and is not conscious of sufficient strength, to carry out completely his original intent, but must content himself with its execution in part,—but that, however, the essential part, and the foundation upon which others may build.

Much work in this philosophy and this science has been done by other authors. Conclusions have been reached and established beyond successful controversion. The author's own will often be found identical with these, yet have been independently reached. There is no need, therefore, that he should note agreement, and he has no occasion to confess obligation. As in his other works, so in this he avoids criticising, except so far as is needful to make clear his own position. A prejudice in the mind of a reader for or against any position or

argument is always created when an author adduces *names*, and his statement is a little less likely to be considered for its own sake. The author is more fond of finding agreement with others than of discovering disagreement. When any thought is possessed in common there is some likelihood that the further movements will be in parallel or converging lines.

The problems of Moral Science so nearly concern human welfare and happiness that it would seem that human thinking might at length attain results that are irrefragable, and must compel assent. Yet in looking over the labors of past thinkers we are able to discover the trammels and limitations under which they thought and wrote, and hence see that their word is not final, and that what seems true is only perfectly true as part of an ampler synthesis which we in our time are better conditioned to make. In our day disagreements upon questions of morality more often arise than ever before in the world's history. The anxiety to determine these is itself an indication of moral advance. Could those who grope after replies to these questions be agreed as to their fundamental postulates, their task would be rendered easier. To show that this, that, or the other point of outlook is not trustworthy, and that the true position enables one to see farther into the distance, is one aim of the present author. Also, that any want of perfect clarity in the outlook, or limit to its penetrative power, can never be perfectly remedied, and that this difficulty has its own subjective purpose and benefit.

The author may seem to some to plunge *in medias res*; but he has endeavored to write primarily for those who are thoughtfully busy with these problems; and some acquaintance on their part with former solutions is necessarily presupposed. But the ordinary and unlearned reader will not find serious difficulty here, as the several problems are presented and argued in such a way as to be easily understood by such.

Hence the author hopes that his book will be found of use as a text-book in those institutions which do not study and teach exhaustively the whole philosophy and science, but aim to furnish a starting-point for further study and inquiry. From the foundations the author has given, any concrete moral question can be argued, and a satisfying conclusion approximately reached.

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The fundamental question, or starting-point for any System of Morality, is, What is the *idea* of the universe? What the intent, aim, or purpose of its Author? That a personal author exists is assumed, and a denial of the same declared to be intellectually absurd. The *a posteriori* method, by itself alone, or purely adhered to, is insufficient. No objective code for moral conduct is possible under the system of Egoistic Hedonism. Catalogue, in naïve sequence, of the questions which must be argued in a Moral Philosophy, as necessary preparation for a Science of Morality. Moral questions, however, are both theoretical and practical. The method of the book is to take up, first, the former; though the method might be reversed with the same result. In order that critical may precede constructive work, the order of the above questions is departed from, by considering, first, the thirteenth question.

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The Kantian order of considering the two questions of a Moral Philosophy is precisely reversed, for reasons given. Selection of certain of the above questions made in order to vindicate the present author's method. The first question argued, then, is not, "What is the ground from which the moral law obliges?" but, "What is the end whereto the

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moral law obliges?" Obligation, as judgment, is simply the admission of this end as rational, since all contradiction is removed. Obligation, as feeling or emotion, is the satisfaction of the æsthetic sense. Human freedom is assumed, but is hereafter to be vindicated; but this freedom is defined as *moral* freedom solely. Physical liberty admits of the distinction of *more* or *less*. No such distinction exists for moral freedom. Spiritual freedom consists in the ability to construct ideal ends or purposes either individualistic or universalistic. In the first it is limited *ab extra*. In the other there is no limitation. But all ends whatever are synthetic, *i. e.*, subjectively constructed. No matter if the material is supplied *ab extra*,—the combination whence a motive arises is subjective. All action whatever is from an anticipation of its consequences, near or more or less remote. The rival schemes of Utilitarianism (so called) and Intuitionism. Each is untrue in what it affirms, and true in what it denies. Concrete illustration to show that action *must* vary according to the anticipation of results. Examination of different Moral Philosophies to show that they are insufficient and leave the reason unsatisfied.

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the weakest one, explains the riddle a step further than the other. The belief of the interference of evil spirits with human affairs may, however, exist without adequate evidence. Such beings, if existing, must have been morally free; otherwise they fall below the human in our regard, and must be explained by physical laws only. If the moral declension of such beings has been the same as the human, there is no new problem to be thought out. If there is,—there must have been a difference in the form of their trial. The only difference thinkable is that between the temptation to pure evil and that to evil mixed and disguised. In man evil works upward, *i. e.*, becomes more spiritual. In evil angels, it must work downward. If evil in pure form be deliberately rejected then there is thenceforth security from lapse. For the evil ones, then, the history must be precisely the reverse of the human history; hence it may be a steady process of spiritual degradation, and thus angels may become demons; and if they find entrance into the human sphere it must be from the physical side, and reach the sensually weakened and imbruted man, rather than the spiritually evil one. What advice as to moral conduct can be given to those holding this belief?

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postulates. The inadequacy of the philosophy which underlies this attempt. Morality by it is reduced to mere subjective prudence. A moral scheme may make *Love* its cardinal principle, but it is not Christian unless it makes such love *responsive*. This conviction is needed to give vigor, permanence, and hope to any moral effort. In Christianity an historical occurrence blends with and illustrates the idea. No morality other than the Christian, rightly understood, is rational, *i.e.*, reduced to a *minimum* of possible contradiction. Though Christian people sometimes *doubt*, they do not doubt the rationality of the argument for their religion. They never doubt the existence, the wisdom, or the power of God. Their doubts are as to His *character*, and spring from the inexplicability of Providence. But this very doubt adds virtue to faith. In the other direction lie despair and inactivity. Nature furnishes symbols to show that enjoyment is the normal rule, and pain the transitory negation. So also, beauty in sight or sound is prophetic. Note also the attractiveness of self-sacrifice. In Christianity alone is this legitimated.

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are part of the plan of the Creative Spirit, when not withheld by the needs of the totality. All pain is therefore vicarious. Men accept or reject Christianity according as they think or decline to think <i>Love</i> to be the <i>impetus</i> , and reciprocal love the final cause of all created work. Logical ground for the latter, or the pessimistic view. That the Creative Spirit did not foreknow the contradiction cannot be maintained. How far moral choices may be determined by physical conditions, and how this may affect responsibility. How the universe is interpreted under the terms of Love. Ground for thinking that the First Principle, if loving, must, in the providential plan, give the utmost proof of it, and thus reveal His innermost, since this alone can elicit the adequate response. Man sets for himself no higher aim, as mode of existence, than that he thinks to be that of the First Principle. Pure Monotheism untenable as not an adequate cause for the existing universe. It degrades our estimate of the Supreme Being. It presupposes creation to be metaphysically necessary, and thus Love disappears as an element of the definition of the First Principle. Love requires creation to be thought as free, or morally necessary. The order of thought cannot be reversed. Christianity saves us from these dilemmas. The doctrine of the Unity in Trinity the only refuge from the short-comings of the Semi-Pantheistic scheme. Nevertheless, if creation is regarded as free, <i>i.e.</i> , as determined by the <i>possible</i> , creation may have been eternal. The Semi-Pantheistic scheme causes the Creator to fall below our respect. The doctrine of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son alone supplies an adequate idea wherefrom to interpret the universe. But before showing how this belief will affect moral conduct, we must first show what is possible without it, in order to see how this must be modified, and life-plans be changed accordingly.	

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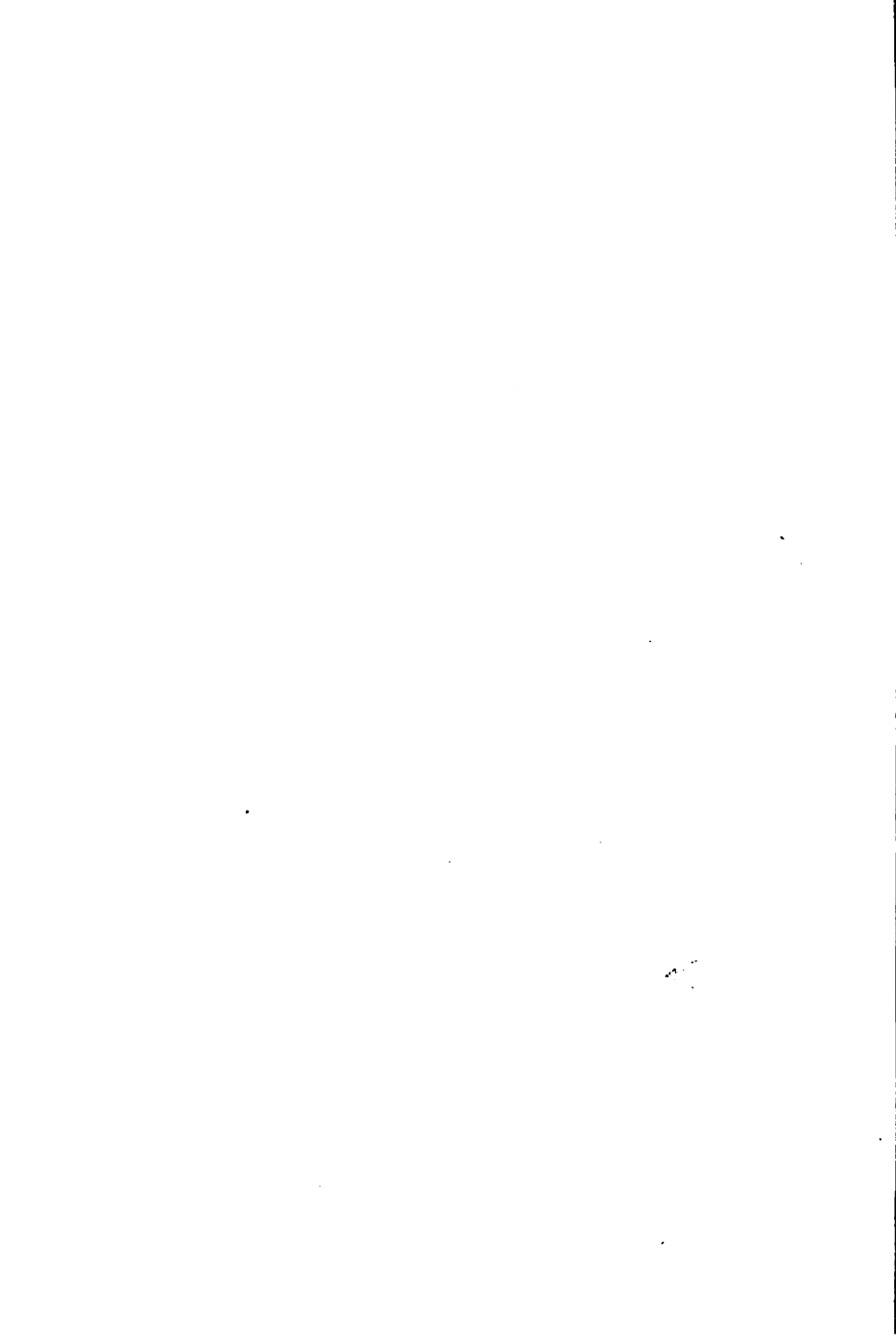
somewhats) determined by spirit-relations. Although this somewhat, after these relations are abstracted, is characterless, nevertheless it must supplement any category of spirit in order to be a *something*. The created concrete can never be deduced from pure spirit. Another elaboration of the above,—*ex gratia*,—there must be that in the absolute existence which renders "time" possible. All other existence can only be thought "in time." Pure Being is timeless, but Becoming a time procedure. There must be that in the First Principle which is capable of a synthetic *a priori* determination. Applying this, unless the moral or loving character is part of the definition of the Absolute, there is no motive for creation. In the rudimentary appearance of the moral, *i.e.*, an imagination of another and more satisfying state of things, there is always an element of physical longing and satisfaction. Thus the physical is indispensable for activity and enjoyment. Hence God, *plus* His creatures, must always exist *in time*.

APPENDIX B

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If a man's character is "the result of himself and his circumstances," to which of these belong any ante-natal determinations? If to the latter, he is not *free*. If to the former, then these ante-natal determinations do not exhaust the definition of *himself*. He issues into the world, having, beside these, the moral ideal itself. This supplies a motive which is perennial. As *form* the good-will is *means*, as *content* it is *end*. The individual's identification with the family and the race is organic. Hence without immortality there is only continuity and no unity. The Greek moral philosophers lacked an ideal having universality. Their moral scheme therefore unreal. We are approaching such an one only by degrees. The Jewish people the last whom we should have expected to bring the moral ideal to true expression. The Roman ideal, like the Papal, is only an external unity. Moral life-rules given in logical order.

PROBLEMS IN ETHICS



PROBLEMS IN ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

THE one question whose true answer makes a Moral Philosophy possible is, What is the *idea* of the universe?—What is the aim or intent of its Author? What is the *terminus* towards which tends all this mighty preparation of star-dust and suns and systems, of mechanical and chemical motions, of life in its gradations, of human intelligence, activity, and emotion?

The question whether there *is* such an Author,—an intelligence and activity which is personal, which shares, though it may exceed, our definition of human personality; which is needful to explain human intelligence, freedom, the degrees of man's physical liberty, and the relation between human persons which involves emotion,—the present author does not propose here to argue. His endeavor to establish this may be found in his former work, *Christian Doctrine Harmonized*; and he here declares that he regards it as the extreme of intellectual absurdity to deny such an Author, and that, besides

his own existence, it is the one thing of which he is absolutely sure.

If this *primum* of all *a priori* thinking be abandoned, and a Moral Science sought to be created by an *a posteriori* induction, this last can only be partial, and hence superficial and untrustworthy. It is ruled by the lower forms and categories of the mind only,—of sense and understanding. The utmost that can be done by this method in constructing a Moral Science, so-called, is to gather a mass of instructions and advice, which will aid the individuals of the human race to agree together, if possible, upon some line of conduct which will produce general contentment and the largest aggregate of enjoyment; or else,—since the conditions for such consultation and agreement do not exist, nor are likely to exist, as men are distributed on this planet,—to endeavor so to educate the individuals of the race who can be reached, that they will be less likely to infringe upon the comfort of others, leaving each one, of course, free, under some self-imposed limitation, to consult his own comfort and enjoyment. There can be no objective code, then, of universal application; hence no such thing as obligation. There can be only subjective maxims, of endless variety and possible discordance. Logically, this Egoistic Hedonism is the only alternative, unless the *primum* of our thought-inquiry be the aim or intent of the Ruler of the universe.

And now, with this as our starting-point, we propose to put in naïve sequence the questions which must be argued in a Moral Philosophy as preparation for a Moral Science.

1. As the divine aim, intent, or idea, takes in, as one of the stages of its evolution, the human race, and must respect the totality of the same, as well as the individuals who compose it, is not this totality an *organism*, whose members have immanent relations? What are these relations in the divine idea?

2. If this aim be for the totality, must it not respect the departed as well as the existing generations?

3. If so, is not continuance of conscious existence, or human immortality (so commonly phrased), a *sine qua non*, and can there be a Moral Science at all except upon this presupposition?

4. Some aim or intent for mankind being thus admitted, to be made real by the activity of the individuals of the same, are there not, in the divine providential arrangement of the conditions of human existence, foreshadowings, and preliminary stages, and helps, and encouragements towards the realization of the idea, in Institutions,—the family, the tribe, the state?

5. By what mental process, or otherwise, have we discovered this aim or intent? Will an analysis of what is called in common speech "the moral consciousness" enable us to descry and describe it?

6. Will an analysis of what may be called "the æsthetic consciousness" also enable us to discover it?

7. Will an examination of "the religious consciousness" conduct us to the same result?

8. Is the individual man, when acknowledging this, the divine aim, free to adopt it as his own also?

9. Should he do so, has he the power to realize it? If this be insufficient, what has limited this power?

10. Is it possible that all men can, sooner or later, be brought to agree in the endeavor to realize this intent? What means can be made use of to bring about the widest possible agreement for men while living on the earth?

11. Is, or can this aim, intent, or idea be clearly seen and acknowledged by all, or by many? If not, is there anything in human consciousness or experience validly contradicting it, or throwing doubt upon it?

12. If clearly seen by few only, is this any evidence against its truth and its claim, and how can the vision of the others be made clear?

13. If in actual experience there are other aims than this, other *a priori* assumptions, can these be shown to rest upon insufficient grounds, and proven to be *culs de sac*?

14. What is the fullest description possible of the ideal that is to be realized; and what faculties, or modes of mental activity, have been, or may be, used in describing it?

15. If the ideal realized be the final upshot of things, or consummation, what approximation to it is possible here on the earth?

16. Does the exhibition or statement of the aim or intent, and its adoption as his own by the individual man, alone and by itself, constitute a sufficient guide for his moral activity?

17. If not, and if rules for the same are needful,

and exist, what are their origin and history ? Are they always trustworthy ? Are all of them changeable ? If any are unchangeable, which are they, and what is the best mode of expression for them ?

18. In questions doubtful for the individual conscience, what solutions are possible, and what aids to the same may be had ?

19. What is meant by *Conscience* ? And is it an infallible criterion, and therefore incapable of culture, or the contrary ?

20. What is the exact meaning of the words " obligation," " motive," and " motive-springs " ; and in how many divisions may the latter be classed ?

21. In gathering all the material, all the factors, that may influence the decision of concrete moral questions, can we afford to leave out of the account *moral evil*,—the propensity to reject as one's own the moral aim, or to wander astray in its attempted pursuit ? If not, what use, in Moral Science, can or should be made of this factor ?

22. Does the allegation that there are *evil spirits*, influencing human motives, decisions, and activity constitute a consideration worthy of examination and respect ? If such are assumed as actual, may the existence of modification of motives thence arising be disregarded in the formulation of practical rules aiming at extent or completeness ? And if admitting on *a priori* grounds the possibility of the existence of *evil spirits*, how may we speculatively determine what modes or channels of influence upon human ones are possible for them ?

23. What is the origin and what is the meaning

of *Institutions* in the human career? How far do they and must they determine the modes of moral activity; *i. e.*, if they cannot alter the *aim*, how may they affect the *means*?

24. Have then the *family*, as such, and the *state*, as such, and represented by its governing power, any moral obligation; and, if so, what should be the aim, immediate and ultimate, of either one, determined by its proper symbol?

25. Is there such a thing as the *corporate conscience*, and what is its symbol, or mode of expression, and how may be decided a question of disagreement between it and the individual conscience?

26. What is the *extent* of the moral aim of the state, and under what conditions may it be modified?

27. If Christian dogmatic utterances have any claim to a place in an exhaustive philosophy, how far do these determine, sanction, or change the character and immediate aims of moral activity?

28. If the religious consciousness in general be regarded as a necessary stage or moment in the evolution of the idea, and therefore an element of the absolute truth, how may, must, or should the differences or fluctuations in the form of the same affect the problems of morality?

29. Can there be a morality at all which has not religious presuppositions; and cannot all so-called moral codes whatever be logically conducted to, or seen to imply, the same?

30. Is it not, therefore, wasting our efforts to formulate rules of morality which do not take account of the religious motive-spring?

31. If Christianity can be shown to be the absolute religion, can any morality, except as determined by it, be said to have absolute obligation? And before any moral question can be decided upon formal or speculative grounds, is it not incumbent first to see how Christian truth may affect it?

32. What are the important questions of individual, social, and political morality which in our day await solution?

33. What advice should, then, be given to any one, aiming to realize the divine intent, in choosing his life plan? And what advice may rightly and safely be given to any one troubled in deciding a concrete question of duty?

34. How far may casuistry be carried with any profit?

It is not claimed that the above questions are presented in exact logical or systematic order. Were the author's plan to be carried out according to his original intent this question of order should have been carefully reflected upon; but as his present aim is less comprehensive, it is not essential. Partial though the treatment of some of these may be, nevertheless one aim is steadily kept in view, and the order of treatment arranged accordingly, which will be found not to differ materially from that indicated by the above questions. The later questions are of immediate practical concern; while the former ones are theoretical. It is obvious that this order might be exactly reversed,—that, *e. g.*, a concrete moral dilemma be presented for solution, whose

discussion would lead back, step by step, to the primal logical premiss which alone could solve and decide it. It is because, in this mental movement backward, or downward, men have stopped before reaching the fundamental one, that we have many errors or shortcomings in the solution of questions of practical morality, *i. e.*, Ethic has been divorced from its own Metaphysic, and the results, like many conclusions of Physical Science, depend upon a fluctuating and vaporous, rather than upon a solid, foundation.

As this work is primarily constructive, and secondarily critical, it is needful, first, to take up, within limits as narrow as possible, the negative or critical part; and therefore the author departs from the seeming logical order of the above questions, and considers, first, the topics suggested by the thirteenth; after which he will proceed, in the main, in the order above given.

CHAPTER I

THE END OF THE MORAL LAW—DEFINITION OF HUMAN FREEDOM

ACCORDING to Kant, Ethic, formally considered, is the science of the ground whereon the moral law obliges; and Ethic, materially considered, is the doctrine of the system of ends whereunto the law obliges. This may be stated otherwise by the following questions: Whence and what is obligation? What is the end to accomplish which we are obliged?

If this be presented as the order in which the inquiry should be made, the present author objects, and exactly reverses it, believing that no result in the first inquiry can be reached till the second inquiry is undertaken. If it be said that the moral law obliges because it is rational or autonomic, we must first show that whereto it obliges. Not till then will it appear as rational. No law for moral action can be had until the end or result of such moral action is first contemplated. Therefore the end proposed enters into the full definition of the action. Only thus can reason be satisfied, and the æsthetic judgment and sense be freed from disturbance.

For the immediate purpose a selection is here made from the questions given in the Introduction, and some amplification made of the same, in order that the reader may know what to expect in what follows.

1. Is the ground of choice of an action, or the adoption of a maxim of conduct, such that it can be called a *law*; and can there be a law which obliges, originating in practical reason, without assuming the concept of an omnipotence which alone can rule the results of such action? In other words, can there be a law obliging free agents without a personal lawgiver?

2. Are there not counterfeits, called *laws* by courtesy, which may be and are mistaken for law in the former sense?

3. Can the genesis of the existing moral consciousness be historically traced? If it could be, would it impair the validity of the form in which the moral law exists in the present thinking mind?

4. Since, as has been said, the ground whereon the moral law obliges cannot be ascertained without first discovering the end whereto it obliges,—if to know the latter is needful in a single case to determine an action as means to that end, must it not be so implicitly in every possible case? In other words, in the decision of moral questions in which men are for the most part agreed, does not such decision depend for its validity upon the end, even though the relation of the proposed action to that end be not inquired into, but taken for granted upon the common testimony or habit of

the whole of mankind, or that part of the human race to which the inquirer has been or is immediately related ?

5. What, then, is the end of the moral law ? Or, what is the idea, or ideal, with which, in all moral judgments, the proposed conduct is compared, either deliberately, or spontaneously ; and are there not degrees of clarity or distinctness in the intuition of such idea, or the imaginative reproduction of such ideal ?

6. In default of sufficient clarity or distinctness, what provisional substitute is there, or may be, for the same ? *i. e.*, what rules of conduct are there which can be adopted as maxims, whence their origin, and to what extent are they valid ?

7. Is a moral law possible, except by admitting the doctrine of immortality ? Otherwise, is human choice other than a mere balancing of expedients, a question of prudence, only called a law in the sense of generalized facts, as in Physical Science ?

8. What are the transcendent relations of the moral idea, or ideal, and how must this idea, or ideal, vary, or fluctuate, as the idea of the Personal Lawgiver differs, or fluctuates ?

9. Must we assume any necessity, physical or metaphysical, to account for what is called freedom ; or must freedom be assumed to explain necessity ; and, if so, what kind of freedom ?

First, then, we have to undertake the discovery and the definition of the end whereto the moral law obliges. This is the problem of Formal Ethics. If this is determined, obligation ensues because the

end, when contemplated, appears as alone rational. It removes all contradiction from thought. It satisfies also the æsthetic sense, and thus removes all disturbance from feeling, and satisfies to the full its profound and perennial aspiration.

The application of this end, by comparison, as a test or criterion of human conduct, and the evolution of rules which may be made maxims, following and depending upon this test, alone constitutes a valid science of Material Ethics, or Morality.

Later on in this inquiry will be found a vindication of the doctrine of moral freedom upon speculative grounds. Just now I must provisionally assume it, and define it, as a starting-point in my argument. No matter what may be his esoteric doctrine, every Moralist, treating of human conduct, assumes what is called human freedom, and starts with the ordinary and naïve admission of the power of choice, viz. : to select between alternatives more or less desirable, and which are in human power to carry into execution. Thus, practically, his assumed definition of freedom is no other than the common one. That man has this ability to choose and to execute is a primary fact or testimony of consciousness, which no argumentation ever enables him entirely to deny. No matter how plausible the arguments of Determinists, and seemingly triumphant, every one has secret doubts of their sufficiency, and clings to and acts upon the ordinary belief. Is it, then, the dullness of the common mind that is to be inferred, or is there, after all, a lurking fallacy in the argument of the Determinist ? But while, notwithstanding all

such argumentation, the opponent still asseverates his freedom, and therefore no adverse arguments can be said to constitute proof, nevertheless, in defending for himself, or to others, the position he naïvely holds, he may, very readily, use arguments which will not stand scrutiny, and thus display weak points to his adversary. It is important, then, that he should not go too far in the other direction, as though there were no truth of which the Determinist is quite sure. He must learn to define his freedom and to discover its limits.

That the human will is a source of power, or physical force, I have never seen successfully proven. *A priori*, it would seem that all physical force is in the chain of sequences, of which animal organisms are but links. Force did not originate with the thinking soul, and, if so, cannot be supplied by it. According to scientific intimations, force appears as a *quantum*, dependent upon the mass of matter in the universe, which nothing organized of that matter can increase; though it by no means follows that from this and from other cause, it may not be undergoing diminution, may not be wasted, and move toward its own extinction. If all motion be spiritual in its origin, its intensity may vary with the purpose of its origination. As links in this chain, human organisms may, then, waste force, *i. e.*, divert it from higher to lower uses, but cannot supply it. The ability to change the direction of physical motion, in other words, to use force for subjective ends, is man's own. He is physically free only so far as his organization enables him to overcome *inertia*,

or resistance. He is spiritually free in his ability to construct ends or purposes, to accomplish which he uses the force within his power, or in the possibility to divert it. This physical liberty or freedom, thus guided by spiritual freedom, is a great gift, but can hardly be thought essential to his being as a thinking subject, inasmuch as he can conceive it to be taken away, or to shrink into nonentity, without contradiction. As long, however, as he is physical in a material universe it must be thought to exist. When we think him acted upon without reacting we have the conception, *death*. But his spiritual freedom consists in his ability, out of the existing material, thus having run through the moulds of sense, understanding, and imagination, to construct ends or purposes, *i. e.*, out of a multitude of possibles to select one to be made actual; and to combine endlessly in the creation of possibles. But on careful examination this, too, turns out to be something short of what he may have fancied his freedom to be, or desires that it might be. His seeming free choice is, after all, only between ends that his nature has supplied and made desirable. The Determinist, here, still shares the strength of the argument. Man is hampered by needs and desires, and only chooses between those ends which come to him as attractive. His freedom is still within limits thus supplied *ab extra*, and is not yet perfect liberty. It is only *that* when there is no limit to his synthesizing ability, when the whole material of the universe is fluent and subservient, when he can *create* what is attractive, and thus that the attraction is within

himself. This so-called freedom, therefore, or the ability to construct possibles, is for man, now, a limited something, admitting of all conceivable degrees. The seeming control turns out so doubtful or transient a possession that the sole distinction remaining, of which he is sure, is that between the ultimate ends or results of such possibles, when realized; that his activity may be guided to the one result, which has objective validity and permanence, or expend itself upon intermediates, upon subjective ends, which have no objective validity or permanence, no result but upon himself. In other words, the sole freedom which is securely his, is *moral* freedom. To show what this moral freedom is, and what is its result, of one kind or another, is the object of my present enquiry.

But while it is admitted that this is the only human freedom, existing thus within limits, it by no means follows that it is not rightly named, and that it is only a delusion, and that some kind of necessity, after all, physical or metaphysical, is the fact and truth. It is not true that among the many possibles, which the thinking soul can thus construct out of the material supplied by the existing universe and his physical organization as related thereto, there is any one which irresistibly compels that which created it; or, as it is commonly put, that the will always obeys the strongest motive,—seeing that there is still another possible lurking in the background, which may sweep aside the former. That, in the attractiveness which any such possible may have, there is no element supplied by the thinking

soul itself,—that all is supplied by the organization,—is not true of the human being, since these possibles are not the objects of simple desires, as with the animals, but are *combinations*, subjectively constructed, thus having their attractiveness from the combination. And all combinations whatever can be ranged in two classes, according to the ultimate ends for which they are means. To say that the attraction is foreign to the soul's self, is true only as it means that the soul did not create itself as a concrete. That which attracts, and is the key and explanation of all conduct, is always one of only *two* things, which may be here by anticipation, or provisionally, characterized as (1) universal harmony, or (2) disintegration and isolation.

Man exists, then, in a world of possibles of his own construction. He selects one, and then another, in succession more or less quick or slow, every day of his life, sometimes for an immediate result or attainment, sometimes for one more remote. His habit, or life-plan, is formed from some foresight or anticipation of certain, or probable, or possible, results at some point in the future. To act rationally is simply to act with such forecasting of results. He traces the consequences of what he elects to do a single step, or many steps, or as far as possible; and when knowledge gives out, and certainty, or even probability, is unattainable, conjecture, or faith, is resorted to. The extent to which results are traced is dependent upon knowledge, or skill, or mental breadth, or the gift of imagination, or upon his own character, his quickness of sympathy, his

yearning after philosophic satisfaction, his love, or his selfishness.

An action is chosen, then, always with a calculation of consequences, either upon others, or upon one's self, or upon both, or upon the community, small or large, to which he belongs, or upon the human race, or upon what he holds as the final result. This calculation he makes, to know whether or not it is desirable, or whether it is prudent, or whether it satisfies the reason. This last is the moral question. When we decide this last question, of right or wrong, or seem to decide it, it is always after tracing some little way, at least, the consequences, certain or probable, of the proposed action. If its rightness or wrongness can be detected by noting the immediate result alone, its effect upon one's self as well as upon what is beyond one's self must be noted as included in such result. This knowledge of one's self is more certain than any knowledge that extends beyond one's self. But self-approval of one's intention, or subjective rightness, by no means secures objective rightness, since the forecast of consequences may be dim, or partial. If it be necessary, to determine this, to go farther than the immediate result beyond one's self, and to look after remoter results, then, to determine the question of objective rightness there must be some rule by which to fix the limit of such an inquiry,—otherwise it must be left to the arbitrary caprice of the inquirer, and any objective standard of rightness would not be attainable. The question arises, then,—May the final limit of such inquiry,

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beyond which it cannot be pushed, be anticipated and a satisfactory decision reached? In other words, is there such a thing as a clear intuition of right, or wrong, and, if so, must it not be possible only at this limit of actual or possible inquiry as to consequences, and is it not impossible to anticipate a true decision, short of this limit, by alleging any anterior intuition?

A correct and full reply to this question will show what there is of error and what of truth, in the rival schemes, the so-called Utilitarianism and Intuitionism of the present day. I shall endeavor to show that each, to be self-consistent and satisfactory, must borrow something of the other,—that each is untrue in what it affirms, and true in its denials; yet that each is susceptible of an affirmation that is true.

Let us see, by an example, how the moral estimate of an act may vary according to the ability to trace, near or far, its results, and a different reason for the estimate be given by different kinds of observers.

The savage man lurks behind his tree, draws his bow, sends forth his arrow, transfixes and slays his fellow who had become his rival or his enemy. He either does not think beyond the immediate angry impulse, or he acts in obedience to the code which allows of revenge, which he has been directly taught, or which he has insensibly absorbed from his environment, or which he has inherited. The question of right or wrong, *i. e.*, the characterization of his action according to an idea, may not

occur to him at the time, but it will or may afterwards. He will then find that any doubt as to the approval of his action will spring from his knowledge or suspicion that the provocation was not sufficient to warrant the deed, and that it will be so adjudged by his chief and the common opinion. The slightest doubt, however, contains within itself the implicit conscious judgment that his act is or may be a contradiction, a failure to realize an idea; and when this idea is unravelled by one who can analyze it, his act is found to be, possibly, a violation of the primal and normal tendencies of human nature. If he is a sane man, and more than an animal, he will not entirely escape this doubt, however obscure and incoherent it may be; and this is proof that he possesses an ideal standard with which to compare his action. His doubt will be resolved, or will hardly start forth, if the provocation to his deed has been, in the common and unhesitating opinion and practice of his tribe, such as to warrant his revenge. He will not trace the consequences of his action beyond the general acquiescence and satisfaction with his act. Thus, one standard has overlain and obliterated the first, for the time being, which second standard may be false or true, *i. e.*, may coalesce with or contradict the other and ideal standard.

The chief of the tribe may trace the results some steps farther, and have the feeling of gratification that a troublesome subject has been removed and will no longer disturb the common weal; or of regret at the loss of a valiant warrior and defender. His mental approval of this manslaughter will depend

upon his balancing of these probabilities. In any case he makes a deliberate or spontaneous comparison with a state of things that is desirable, either in the immediate future, or in a future as far off as his knowledge and imagination can carry him, and picture clearly. One result is acquiesced in rather than the other, as furnishing a contradiction less intense than the other to some ideal standard, which standard exists, though he may not be able to describe it, or define it clearly.

The sage, or medicine-man, of the tribe, who has been accustomed to do the thinking for the others, and who is a bit of a philosopher, takes a somewhat deeper view, and deprecates, perhaps, the existence of the spirit out of which such revengeful acts come,—the spirit of malevolence, the true origin of all or much of the suffering that befalls the tribe, the real impediment in the way of its comfort and enjoyment. He makes, thus, the comparison between a state of things in which men are benevolent and helpful, and one in which they are malevolent and harmful, and discovers that human souls are fountains of sweet or bitter waters, and that the true desirable in a final judgment is the one character and not the other. He may despair of any realization of this, and consider only what had best be done under existing circumstances.

Thus far, it seems, the intelligence, even of the savage man, may go; and the conclusions he has reached are precisely those which the pale-faced Utilitarian has reached, who bemoans the diminished aggregate of the pleasure of the human race, rather

than that of the tribe; or which the Intuitionist has reached, who laments the diminished sanctity, clearness, and force of the law that forbids homicide, because the evil disposition is thereby intensified and its propagating power increased, and who sets himself to the task of legislation to diminish such crimes. Even he, however, laments the contradiction to the intuition on account of the undesirableness, and hence the irrationality, of the consequences.

And it is more than probable that in savage, as well as in civilized, life, there is some endeavor to trace the consequences of action upon human existence after death; and the inquiry thus mingles with the religious question; and, if so, there can be no trustworthy solution of any moral question without taking this into the account. Later on in this treatise I shall inquire whether this aspect is not absolutely indispensable, and whether without it the inquiry is worth making at all.

What I would emphasize now is that the moral character of an action will depend not only upon its motive-spring, but upon its motive, *i. e.*, its looked-for results; that the inquiry into these results, pushed as far as possible, will disclose the character of the motive-spring; that it is impossible to aim at the highest and only pure rational result without being moved thereto by the highest and purest motive-spring,—*i. e.*, that perfect morality is necessarily *religion*.

If we must take into consideration the end of the moral law, in some shape or other, and that,

too, at the start, we are, then, and thus, prepared to inquire after the ground of moral obligation (if, indeed, in some solutions, the word *obligation* be not a misnomer, and the inquiry, when correctly phrased, is not "Why *should* men do thus and not otherwise?" but "Why *do* men thus and not otherwise?"). Let us consider the question, first, in this form. When, then, a man chooses one act rather than another, or adopts a maxim of living, rejecting others, does he do this because the consequences, so far as he is able to trace them, or chooses to trace them, are agreeable, or likely to be agreeable, to *himself alone*, *i. e.*, to enhance his happiness; and is the question how far he shall seek or shun the satisfaction of others to be decided by its probable agreeableness or disagreeableness to *himself*?

Or, secondly, does he prefer the one thing to the other because he thinks it will increase the sum of human enjoyment, or of all animal enjoyment, so far as life in this world is concerned?

Or, thirdly, is it because he has a sense, or sensibility, that is agreeably or disagreeably affected by one choice or the other; and, if so, is this a unique sense, or a familiar one in special relation; and is it simple or compound, immediate or derived?

Or, fourthly, does he prefer one action or maxim of conduct because it is rational? And, if so, how is the decision of reason made,—by an immediate *pronunciamento*, or only after investigation of indubitable results?—and if so, results of what kind?

Or, fifthly, does the decision of reason take the form of *law* because it is the behest of the Eternal

Reason, and therefore not an impotent reason, but one having absolute and omnipotent sanction, and which rules the intellectual and physical universe according to moral requirements ?

What is the process, then, through which man passes when he decides between possible actions ? Does he balance such alternatives as the above questions indicate ; and, if so, which—or all ? Is there any process through which he can be shown to pass, even though not fully or clearly conscious of it, of which we can affirm that it is a moral judgment ?

We cannot say, of course, that he always does. As an animal, acting impulsively or instinctively, he does not. As an imitative human unit he often does not, but follows the track into which the social machine has put him. But he often does, and does oftener than he is consciously aware. And when he does ask the moral question, which is the form of it ? Which is the process through which, in every case, he inevitably passes ?

There are learned names derived from the answers given to these questions—more or less accurately and uniformly given. These may be convenient. I do not much care to use them. I endeavor after such a statement as will include elements belonging to each one of them.

Of course, as I said, there is a whole class of actions to which we have an immediate and instinctive propulsion, which we yield to unhesitatingly. And there is another class selected because they serve some plan of satisfaction or enjoyment, near

or far, for ourselves, which nothing within us checks us for selecting. If we hesitate, it is either from a doubt whether the action is prudent or imprudent, or whether it is right or wrong. Are these distinctions identical? Is what is prudent right for that reason, and what is imprudent wrong for that reason? So some have thought, and that there is no distinction between actions but as they make, or are thought to make, for pleasure or pain to ourselves; but as they preserve or hinder in us the capacity for enjoyment. But when one begins to think of the effects of his action upon others, increasing or diminishing *their* pain or pleasure, then, certainly, he does hesitate on this account. The reflection upon their pain is painful to him,—the imagination of their pleasure is pleasurable to him. If, then, he refrains from giving another pain, or prefers the enjoyment of some other to his own immediately proposed gratification, is the satisfaction he receives from such preference an equivalent for the enjoyment from which he has refrained, or more than an equivalent, so that it may still be said that he has sought only his own enjoyment, and has given up the lesser for the greater, the transient or doubtful one for one more untroubled and permanent? Simple as this question may seem, it is one which has troubled the human intellect for centuries, and a categorical "Yes" or "No" has been in turn denied, and has failed to put the inquiry at rest. A reply, then, must be sought and reached which somehow includes both the affirmation and the negation.

There are some, however, who have stopped, after a very brief or partial inquiry, and rested upon a solution very simple and very readily reached, viz. : that it is the selfishness, or the preference of one's own enjoyment, that constitutes the wrongness, and the benevolence, or deliberate preference of others' enjoyment, that constitutes the rightness. There are various forms of such a scheme, some purely ethical, and some properly theological.

Others, again, reflecting upon this interesting fact of *sympathy*, a mysterious nerve-system which binds together the human race and is the involuntary basis from which spring all voluntary ties, and which, in its coarser filaments, includes all animal life, have fancied that they have found the explanation of rightness and wrongness in this, and that a universal sympathy, both physical and mental, which from its universality is disinterested and impartial, is therefore the true criterion. But the theory fails when put to practical use, since that which may meet with universal sympathy at one time may afterwards fail to meet with any or more than partial sympathy. And when the universality is made abstract it turns out to be nothing other than cold human reason under a new name.

And if a new sense is assumed and called " the moral sense," having only the authority of a sense, it cannot be shown that it has authority over the other senses, but is only co-ordinate with them. What men call *conscience*, when analyzed, proves to have other elements than this, as will later be shown.

Or if men hesitate before an action, doubting

whether it be right, is it supposed to be possibly wrong because believed to diminish the aggregate of human enjoyment, or of animal enjoyment as well? And does the subjective rightness of an action consist in the intention thus to add to the aggregate of enjoyment? And does its objective rightness mean merely that it is a demonstrated or undoubted fact that it does so add? If so, it must follow that if anything can be found that all men rejoice in, that must be, *ipso facto*, right; and if anything can be found that all men detest and shun, that must be wrong. This is the solution that is the favorite one with many in these days. Later on in this treatise I shall give it critical examination, not with the purpose absolutely to destroy it, but to alter its form of statement, to disentangle and give correct expression to the element of truth it contains.

A solution which has quite as confident and strenuous advocates is that which makes the rightness or wrongness of actions discoverable by the *judgment*, and to consist in conformity or nonconformity to an idea of the reason that is part of the soul's native furniture, the recognition of which is therefore called an intuition. If this be true, it is of the highest importance to establish the existence of this idea, and to give it correct expression. It will have to be ascertained whether the approval of the reason is simple, immediate, and unreflecting, acting with the readiness of a sense or instinct, incapable of analysis, giving no explanation or vindication of its decision; or whether reasons can be given

for the judgment of approval. But when the idea is synthetically elaborated, do we learn anything more about it by giving it a new name, by calling it "truth," or "perfection," or "universal order," or "obedience to the behests of a lawgiver," or "the normal constitution of things," etc. ? Do not all these definitions need definition and unification ? My aim will be to show that, fully to define this idea and justify all these appellations, it must be regarded as an *ideal*, rather than a pure *idea*, a concrete rather than an abstract; that to be rightly influential upon human conduct it must be taken out of the cold region of pure thought and brought within the warm one of imagination.

I might, indeed, take up all the above ethical theories, and others besides, *seriatim*, and criticise them in detail in my own way, which would not be precisely like any other's way, to show their insufficiency, their weak points, and the need and mode of correction; but this work has already been done with measurable success by the moral philosophers of the different schools, each of whom has detected the unsatisfying points in the systems opposed to his own, yet has failed to compel assent to his own. But I prefer to make the constructive my main method, and to endeavor to build a system which will combine the elements of truth in each and all of these theories, which will evidence itself by its own self-consistency; undertaking a polemic only when it seems necessary to correct a delusion, and stopping for prolonged examination and thorough analysis at those points which are essential, which

absolutely need vindication, or which have been denied or overlooked.

It will be found, as the result of my inquiry, that the questions, What action or maxim is right ? or, Is there a law which obliges ? reduce themselves to the profounder problem,—Is there an absolute, or ideal, good, an end, designed by the Creator in the primal fiat, an end to which all things are tending, a good, metaphysical and physical, and only rightly called *moral* during the antecedent stages of the process, during the imperfections of attainment ? If there be, this is the objective good, in whose realization alone reason is satisfied. To move towards it, under existing limitations and restraints, is moral good. To be minded or determined to move towards it is subjective good. To have any lower or lesser aim forfeits the right to call it subjectively good. All subjective rightness is imperfect in so far as the immediate aim is not absolutely coincident with what is objectively right. Were this coincidence perfect, and did pure subjective spontaneity move always and securely towards the objective good, then objective goodness itself would be such chiefly because of the subjunctive goodness, though other elements be required for the perfect good, all which will be shown. This foundation must first be laid, and then all the factors needful for the investigation of moral problems will be gathered, and must be, ere any concrete moral question can be satisfactorily solved.

CHAPTER II

UTILITARIANISM, OR HEDONISM—THE TRUTH IN IT

WHAT has given vitality hitherto to all schemes of Moral Philosophy which have been called "Utilitarian" is a primary truth which the Intuitionist has made too little account of, viz.: that *feeling* or emotion is an essential element in *all* existence, and therefore that there is no human or rational existence without enjoyment or its opposite. The abstract logical has no being, — the abstract physical has no being. Existence is only concrete and a synthesis. The physical and the metaphysical elements of this synthesis have their unity in feeling, without which neither has any meaning. They are mere *phantasmagoria*, projected shadows on the field of the mind, without substance, of two dimensions only, thin, vapory, barren, or prolific of results as unreal. It is because feeling can be other than enjoyment, because enjoyment can be diminished and impaired, and its loss be followed with regret, because, in short, bodily pain exists, and mental perturbation, and agony, and longing, because thus the actual falls short of the ideal,—it is only

on this account that the *moral* exists and the moral inquiry is made. Were there perfect animal satisfaction and mental repose, there could be no such inquiry as whether an action is right or wrong. No physical convulsion, even, could produce mental disturbance, and the æsthetic sense could not be violated. It is not in our power to imagine intelligences to exist as pure mechanisms and without feeling. Consciousness without enjoyment or its opposite is no more conceivable than any geometrical absurdity. While the physical and the metaphysical may be abstractly thought, or, rather, they can be only in their interrelation, it is only as reaching unity in feeling that they can constitute a concrete, and come within the scope of the imagination, and have any reality. And, as has been said, it is because conscious feeling can have fluctuations and contradictions that any moral question can be made. Pure spontaneity is not *law*, in the sense of that which brings obligation. The opposite of spontaneity, contradiction, necessitates the conception of law.

Again,—to approach otherwise the thought I am endeavoring to fix,—were the First Principle of the universe, from which all things have sprung, or are springing, and which binds all things together, exhausted by our notions of energy and thought only, and the outcome of the same be a mere physical harmony with metaphysical relations, and were such combination appreciable by pure thought, there still could be no question of moral distinctions. The universe would show itself, then, as an

objective æsthetic merely, without a subjective correlative, — mere order without delight in it; if, indeed, the conception of order would not itself evaporate. There would be no place in this universe for any such intelligence as the human, and nothing in it to account for the human. The cold deity of the defunct Deism could never have given birth to machines with *souls*. It would have exhausted its capacity at the utmost with vegetable, and could never have attained the excellence of animal life.

As human intelligence, then, never exists without feeling, it cannot be rightly described or understood by any process of abstraction which leaves out this element, unless it be by synthesis restored. Nor can any concrete existence whatever be rightly understood without taking into account this element. Man suffers, or rejoices, or, at least, is complacent or uneasy, with every physical movement, with every fluctuation of consciousness. There is delight in simple health; there is joy in existence only. A physical feeling runs through the loftiest intellectual rapture. It is when the mind soars the highest, or moves with strongest wing, that we have also

“sensations sweet

Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.”

All animal life is pleasure. And underneath all plant life, in all the play of the elements, in all the ceaseless stir of the chemical and mechanical processes and changes, in all the revolutions and perturbations of planets and stars and systems, there is

also rejoicing. It is absolutely impossible to think them as real without thinking rejoicing in them. Rather they have no being but as related to that which rejoices.

Such an assertion as this may be called poetic or mystical. It is both, and thanks be to the poets and the mystics for having uttered it, for having seen and known it. But it is also scientific. It is philosophically, and, if you please, coldly, true. It is fact and truth, because its contradiction is inconceivable, in the full sense, unthinkable.

The whole question reduces itself to the simple inquiry, Is it possible to think existence without consciousness? All concrete existence is only such by virtue of our own thought. It is needless to repeat the argument for this so-often demonstrated position. Could the actual existence be other than it is, it could only be so by virtue of thought. Therefore consciousness pervades it, holds it, comprises it, constitutes it. Abstractions are only conveniences. They are mental analyses only, and are not real. To suppose any one of them real would cause the whole synthesis to evaporate into non-entity. Therefore consciousness includes and creates all existence. And, if consciousness, then there is rejoicing in it. Mentally to refuse to acknowledge this is to leave us in a nebula of words from which all meaning has been dissipated. That which we see and hear has no law. Eliminate from it, if such a thing were possible, all meaning, purpose, and delight, and we are relegated to the dominion of chance, and would have no right to be surprised at

any fantastic trick nature might play us. The stars might turn into balloons, and the planets into grinning faces. Men might rush into space, and play at ball with suns and comets, and all would be neither rational nor irrational, for this distinction would have ceased to be. Order, uniformity, progress, which now we speak of as attributes of whatever exists for us, instead of this fantastic caprice, are predicates of consciousness only, and have no meaning severed from it. If consciousness is included in and includes all existence, it must for and in our thought be prior to all determination and change. And if consciousness is the absolute presupposition of all existence and change, then, as before, enjoyment is indispensable to any such conception. It is pure gratuity, having admitted an absolute or eternal consciousness, to say that it is, or can be, as power and wisdom only, or abstract will and intelligence, without complacency, delight, and such desire as issues in activity; that this characteristic of humanity, acknowledged to be the most precious, to be the highest characteristic of ourselves, is not to be found in the source from which we have sprung. If there are any points of resemblance, any connection, between ourselves and the source from which we have sprung, it must be in that which is highest in us, that which is characteristic of us, as well as in that which is lower. We direct motion, we think,—so must the First Principle direct motion and think. We enjoy,—so must the First Principle enjoy. We act for an end,—so must the First Principle act for

an end. Otherwise there is nothing in common, and man must explain himself irrespective of anything beyond himself. Love, which is only love as it desires reciprocal love, and is the *primum* of all movement, change, and development, if it be akin to our own love (for otherwise it has no meaning), must include blessedness, and the satisfaction of itself in its reciprocation. Therefore the play of the physical forces, in the stars and systems, in the blossoming which breaks out upon the planets, is as rightly thought as rejoicing as it is as motion, indeed is only comprehensible therefor.

It is because, then, all normal existence includes delight as part of its definition, that there can be *desire* in conscious intelligences, since existence can also be abnormal, and delight can diminish and can be turned into pain. There can be repulsion, then; and because there can be desire and repulsion, the distinctions of right and wrong are possible, and exist. This is what we may grant to the Utilitarian as a precious and primary truth, which, however, he has not rightly and successfully used.

Let us note that pleasure and pain are relative to a conscious subject, and have no meaning otherwise; cannot be abstracted and thought of in themselves; are only modes of concrete existence, whether the organized physical, or having spiritual relations as well. As abstractions they have no worth. It is the enjoying or suffering soul, whether merely animal, or, also, spiritual, that has worth, and these abstractions are elevated in significance and dignity only as the subject to which they inhere rises in dignity and

complexity of organization, becomes ampler, larger, freer, more developed, and has more subtle and exquisite possibilities. Therefore pleasure and pain are desirable or otherwise in degrees respective of the physical condition and capabilities of the subject, and of his intellectual condition and capabilities. The highest delight belongs only to the noblest mind and the most perfect body. While there is anything lacking to the perfection of mind or body, in the whole compass of their possibilities, delight is modifiable. As long as knowledge is imperfect, as long as matter in its *inertia* brings restraint, and is not subservient to spirit, blessedness cannot exist, nor delight reach its height,—longing and pain must exist.

This is to show that we cannot, as some Utilitarians have attempted, solve the question of right and wrong by regarding pleasure and pain alone, any more than we can by endeavoring to think existence without pleasure or pain. Feeling, though indispensable, is not the whole of conscious existence. Feeling cannot explain being and thought, except as it implies them. Nor can thought, abstracted, explain being and feeling; or pure, undetermined being explain thought and feeling. They exist only in synthesis, and each to have meaning requires the others. The explanation is in their right relation. What that relation is; how they are relative to each other in the First Principle; how they are to be adjusted to each other in the ideal, normal, and ultimate constitution of the entire sum of existence;—these are the essential parts of the inquiry,

without which there is no solution of the question of right and wrong.

The domain of our knowledge and the sphere of our activity appear to us under three aspects,—as material or physical, as intellectual or ideal, and as emotional or ethical; whence distinctions in the modes and aims of our activity. The ideal adjustment to each other of these three aspects of all that exists,—the true order which admits of no reversal,—the ascertainment of the one which determines the relation of the other two,—all this may be expressed by the word *correspondence*, which here means absolute rationality. Different schools of philosophy emerge according as one or the other takes the lead and is made to explain the other two. I do not choose to name their authors; but present the thesis, that if the material or physical be made primal and paramount, the ethical exists only in name; and the moral inquiry might at once be abandoned. If the abstractly logical be made the *primum*, and to contain in itself the sole explanation, the material or physical retires into the realm of shadows; and if feeling is lost sight of, the ethical also disappears. We have simply that which *is*, and the inquiry "what ought to be" is illegitimate. Justice to each element, and satisfaction for thought, are to be had only by making feeling, or the ethical, the *primum*, for this alone gives the other aspects of existence any meaning.

With this statement, which will hereafter be further amplified and vindicated, and which is put

forth here in order to show my objective end, I now shall endeavor to disentangle the elements of truth and error in the rival systems of Utilitarianism and Intuitionism.

CHAPTER III

CRITIQUE OF ALTRUISTIC HEDONISM

THE difficulties and shortcomings of pure intuitionism in Ethics have, during the last half-century, caused a relapse into a more carefully thought Utilitarianism, or, more correctly, Universalistic Hedonism. It is an improved Benthamism. One branch of this school uses the phraseology of Evolution, and gives a theory of the genesis of moral judgments, and also a forecasting of the end whither man's moral history is tending. The principle of every form of Universalistic Hedonism is,—pleasure, happiness, pleasure on its own account, as the most valuable and desirable thing. Therefore the greatest enjoyment of the greatest number is the only legitimate objective end of all moral action. If pleasure is valued on its own account, there seems no consistency in limiting this to human enjoyment, as is frankly admitted by some advocates of the scheme, and the enjoyment of all animal life may or should be included in the reckoning. This, however, will not affect the calculation very largely, seeing that pleasure is thought to have value not merely from its spatial and numerical diffusion, but

from its fineness and complexity and dignity; and all animal pleasure, from its coarser quality, will therefore weigh but little in comparison with human delight. Yet the distinctions and classifications of pleasures made by Bentham can have no objective worth, since there is no standard by which to compare and judge them. They are subjective only, and the order and arrangement would differ for every individual mind. But, abandoning any such endeavor to fix the relative value of pleasures, and regarding enjoyment as an abstract total, to multiply and intensify and refine upon and prolong enjoyment, of whatever kind, is what constitutes the purpose of right action, and rightness varies according to the degrees of success, and there is no other rightness. If this be the aim, however, the difficulty arises, as was said, of finding a standard by which to gauge the ponderance of pleasures put before us to choose from, since these seem to have nothing in common but the name. How, for instance, ascertain the numerical values of the dull complacency of the mollusk, the greed with which the tiger tears his victim, the sweet serenity of the mote in the sunbeam, and the joy of the singing bird, and compare these with corresponding physical pleasures in humanity, and the higher mental and emotional delights! It is evident, at a glance, that there is, and can be, no objective standard; that every standard will be subjective and idiosyncratic, and therefore that any strict rule or valuation of an action, as prudent or obligatory (if this word is used), is impossible. Every moral

philosopher of this school exhibits such a standard as accords with his subjective views, and prepares *formulae* accordingly; which *formulae* may be very useful in assisting other philosophers to formulate, as is acknowledged concerning the classifications of Bentham, but which are of doubtful, if of any, use to the ordinary man, debating with himself a question of conscience, or even of prudence.

But some sort of objective notion of an aggregate of pleasure, of variant composition and complexity in every individual case, having been formed, and set up in mental contemplation as the objective end, whatever conduct serves, or best serves, to accomplish this purpose, whatever is useful towards it, is said to be right conduct, and hence comes the name "Utilitarian." This name, however, is inaccurate. *Use* is always relative to the end or purpose, no matter what that may be. Were the end of action the speedy destruction of the human race, instead of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, whatever conduct served to bring about such destruction would be *useful* towards it. No one, however, is deceived by the name, except that he may doubt whether the word means what is useful for his own happiness, or for that of a limited number, or for the general happiness. If he have determined to add to any other gratification than his own, he may or must fix a limit within which he will confine his effort and influence, which each, again, must arbitrarily fix for himself, though advice and cautions, resultant from the experience of others, may be of service to him. How large the number whom

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he can affect he cannot know for certain. The farther removed from him in space or time the more doubtful will become the consequences of his own action. What may bring immediate pleasure to some may bring remote distress to others. Disturbing influences will multiply, the likelihood of disappointment increase, with every step onward. The final results of his action, and its effect upon the general happiness, he must commit to chance or to Providence; and indeed he can never be entirely certain that he has not on the whole diminished instead of increased the sum of mundane enjoyment. He can only take the more hopeful view when believing that a benevolent Providence will annul his mistakes, and divert the results of his action to His own end.

With this as his guiding principle, every one, however, will fix upon some point in the future to which he thinks that his influence will extend, and endeavor so to live and act that the greatest sum of enjoyment possible shall *then* exist. In this ability of forecasting, men, it is evident, can be mutually helpful, and it will be the aim of Utilitarian science to render such help, whereby each will be able to push his ideal *terminus* farther into the future. Confessedly we are all under obligations to our progenitors in this respect, and have treasured up the results of their experience and reflection, so that the tendency to bring pleasure or pain, immediate or remote, of a vast number of actions is very well ascertained, and we seldom hesitate or debate the question.

But we do sometimes hesitate, and the more one thinks for himself the less inclined he will be to accept without questioning the common judgment, the more intent to find, if possible, some absolute standard. The results of his action are so likely to be modified by unforeseen events, physical and spiritual, that, however valuable the maxims in common use may be, their aid often deserts us when there is the sorest need. There will be an habitual despair of tracing, and therefore no effort or impulse to trace, the consequences of multitudes of actions, and they will therefore be judged to be indifferent, to have no moral quality, or to have precisely the significance and worth they have in a system or theory of Egoistic Hedonism,—*i. e.*, each one will say, "they are right because they add to *my* happiness," the inability being confessed to discover whether they add to, or in the least subtract from, the happiness of any one else. A doubt as to their rightness can spring only from the discovery or suspicion that the proposed action may diminish the pleasure of another. I, being supposed to have set up as my purpose an aggregate of pleasure in general, may be disposed for that end to forego a desired gratification to myself,—to make sacrifice, in short; and then the curious question will arise whether the complacency at the sacrifice will be an equivalent, or more than an equivalent, for the pleasure I shall have missed. If it is not, then it is doubtful whether after all I have succeeded, whether I have not given up a certain or intense gratification to myself for a doubtful or weaker one to some one

else. If it is an equivalent, then I have still the inquiry to make whether sacrifice, which I have found a counterbalancing delight to any pleasure missed, will be so in any case but my own, whether I can insist upon it, or even advise it as a general rule. Unless men should ever be struck into a monotonous uniformity, it is evident that any standard of the desirableness of sacrifice, or its expediency, or its obligation (if the word is used), can be only a subjective one, and a universal rule is impossible.

Whether a question of conscience, in its right definition, can arise when the system of Universalistic Hedonism is admitted into the mind as true, may be doubted. The lowest view of conscience is, that intelligence imposes some restraint upon the individual will for prudence' sake. But one man's prudence is not another's, and so, practically, under this system, the only universal restraint upon the individual will is the common opinion, or the behest of the legislator, causing one to doubt whether his prudential conclusions have been correct. The existence of *might*, then, whether physical or mental, must affect the question of *right*. That might determines right seems so to contradict the common instinct, that it is not surprising that as a rule of practice Utilitarianism is confined to the moral philosophers of that school, and that the people still cling blindly to the old Intuitionism, and never can rid themselves of the belief that there is some other standard of rightness than each man's subjective opinion of how his conduct may affect happiness in general.

To be consistent with his governing principle the Utilitarian must hold that it is the pleasure that is of worth, or the individual soul only so far as it can experience pleasure; that pleasure must be got somehow, and that it is indifferent where it falls. Delight is figured as a sum, capable of indefinite increase or diminution, and which can be arithmetically or, somehow, quantitatively parcelled out. It may be pretty evenly distributed, or very unequally. The system does not furnish any necessary requirement that it should be evenly distributed. Such even distribution is clearly seen to be impossible, but the aggregate should be kept at high tide. So to keep it is duty, and the only duty. It may fall in great measure to the lot of the majority, while a minority somewhere will have to be robbed. Or the minority may be elevated and favored and pampered and overwhelmed with delights, at the expense of the general mass; nay, there would be no contradiction in the system if all the delights should be concentrated in the bosoms of a very few, of two or three, if it could thus exist in sufficient intensity, even though all the rest should be doomed to diminution and extinction, and be spurned from the universe. Any such conception as justice or equality of distribution has to be imported from without, unless it can be shown that the highest possible aggregate is only attainable by such even distribution.

And as to this, one would have to convince mankind of it, ere it could become a practical maxim. One may well doubt whether laboring after an even

distribution of enjoyment will secure the greatest possible aggregate of enjoyment. It is an impossible demonstration under the confessed inability to trace the consequences of actions very far. If one believes it, it must be on other grounds than any such possible demonstration, and the very utmost of belief will be that in the farthest future there will be only such even distribution of delight as is consistent with individual capacity for delight, a respect in which concrete intelligences must indefinitely differ, and in which it is impossible to conceive that they will ever be monotonously similar.

This abstraction of happiness from the soul in which it resides, and giving it positive worth, reminds one of certain doctrines which have appeared in the history of theology, *e. g.*, the doctrine of substitution, according to which so much suffering has to occur, and its end is served when it falls upon the innocent as well as when it falls upon the guilty.

No wonder that the common conscience relucts at such a moral valuation, and shrinks from thinking that the greatest happiness of the greatest number is rightly purchased if at the expense of the smaller number excluded. If this be held necessary or allowable there is no crime which may not be occasionally justified. A victim may be cast into the jaws of Moloch, or hurled into the yawning pit, or somehow be made to die for the people. To make sacrifice of one's self is one thing. To make sacrifice of another is another thing. Under the Utilitarian system they have the same absolute worth so the river of delight be kept full and at uniform level.

The advocates of this system are so painfully at sea in the endeavor to formulate available rules of conduct for men in general, that it is not to be wondered at that they acknowledge their failure, at the present stage of the world's history, and only hope for success in the distant future; and meanwhile relegate mankind to the morality of common sense, and commend them provisionally to the old and despised Intuitionism with all its unsatisfactoriness.

The error, as I have said, consists in abstracting the element of feeling, and considering it apart from the complex subject in which it inheres. It is the soul that is of worth, not its delight; and that not merely because it can feel delight, but because it is an intricate and inexhaustible thing, capable of such activity as can enrich the universe with new delights, and intensify and vary them without limit, capable even of such wondrous alchemy as to transmute pain into pleasure. No future can satisfy it short of a commonwealth of souls, each having its own capacity for enjoyment capable of being increased and varied by that of each and every other; in which delight will be Protean and perennial; and for which the intellectual relations and the physical environment are correspondent and subservient. If such a state of things is within the sphere of possibility, that alone is right which helps towards it, or which speeds its coming, and all shortcoming whatever is, so far, wrong.

In the confessed inability to trace the consequences of actions to see whether they do or do not

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tend to this result, is there any criterion ready at hand for men to test them, so that they are not left without guidance ? It is the claim of the Intuitionalist that there is such a criterion. This let me now examine.

CHAPTER IV

CRITIQUE OF INTUITIONALISM—MOTIVE-SPRINGS

THE claim of the Intuitionist is, that when an action is fully defined, and there is taken into the account not only (1) the overt activity, the physical motion, or the mental divergence, but (2) the intent or purposed design relative to the result hoped for or believed in, to be accomplished in the immediate future, or a future as far off as can be clearly traced, and (3) the motive-spring, *i. e.*, the reason why the man does so and not otherwise,—when thus the action is fully defined as act, intent or motive, and motive-spring, that then the reason infallibly approves or disapproves; that it makes an immediate *pronunciamento* of right or wrong without delay or deliberation; that it sees the rightness as it sees a necessary truth, detects a wrongness as it detects a contradiction; that this immediate judgment is spontaneous, inevitable, unchangeable, simple, incapable of further analysis, and therefore is called an intuition; that it is as much to be trusted as an intuition of sense, and implies simply faith in human reason, in the trustworthiness of the faculties (modes of activity) which make up our constitution. If, then, when an inquiry is started, there is

hesitation, it is not from any weakness or confusion in the reason, any want of clearness in the intuition, but because there has been some defect in the presentation of the proposed action, because its character, or its intent, is not made apparent. The ambiguity exists because the statement or description of the action given to another, or in imagination to one's self, does not come up to the full definition of an action. The immediateness of the intuitive judgment is only suspended or delayed till the action is thus rightly and fully understood.

Presently I shall examine what motive-springs there may be to any so-called moral activity, and what are the grounds of preference, and why in the Intuitionist system one is called right and not the others. But, first, let me consider that part of the definition of an action which the Intuitionist calls the *intent* or *motive*, as distinguished from the motive-spring, to see whether his definition is correct and complete.

Is it possible, then, to confine the intent to the immediate consequence, to the near time, or the near space? Does not the mind in imagination flash along the line of probable or certain remote results, or at least has it not done so in the past upon a similar presentation, or trusted in the knowledge or the probability that others have done this? If so, where is the limit where one must stop? Is any result beyond one's self, and not immediate or upon one's self, so absolutely certain that, in every conceivable case, to move towards it is absolutely right, and a general rule can be framed? Let us

take a concrete case for illustration. A woman, let us suppose, sees from her door her child struggling in the water into which it has fallen. It is easy for her to rush forward and rescue it. The Intuitionist would say it is her duty. But on the instant she discovers that her house is on fire, and another child needs rescuing from the flames. What becomes of the former duty in such a case? Can she judge then which is duty without a mental comparison of the results of these alternative actions, concluding one set of consequences to be preferable for some reason or other? Can she be absolutely sure that one action is right rather than the other, unless she has perfect confidence in the truth of her vaticination, and is such confidence possible? She has then no absolutely trustworthy intuition that one act is right and not the other. Her intuition is of the truth of the abstract maxim, that it is a mother's duty to preserve from harm her children. But circumstances intervene in which it seems her duty to neglect the preservation of one of these, and let the one child be drowned. The conflagration may spread and involve others in destruction. Therefore she prefers to rescue the child in the house, and to abandon the other to certain death. There seem to be two duties conflicting. She cannot do both, and prefers one to the other from some imaginative forecasting, more or less rapid or correct, of the consequences. The intent may make either action subjectively right, but not for a certainty objectively so, unless the full results are clearly and unmistakably seen.

It is because there is a common agreement among men as to the desirableness of the consequences of many actions, that the judgment of their rightness is so immediate. Just so far as the results, immediate or remote, are doubtful, the so-called intuition is at fault. I do not say that there is no result to which if an action leads there is not an intuition of its rightness; but that the intuition does not infallibly decide from the inspection of the immediate or near result, and that, could the man have clear vision of remote and yet remoter results, he might repeatedly reverse his judgments. The analysis of the Intuitionist has been incomplete. The intuition has been put in the wrong place.

Let us now consider how the matter is affected by an examination of the motive-spring. If it be allowed that this is part of the full definition of an action, then, if by the motive-spring be meant *the reason why*, is it not evident that reason will pronounce to be right only such an action as has the true reason why, and no other? Certainly this must be necessary to make it subjectively right; and the Intuitionist has never gone so far as to contend that an action may be objectively right that is not subjectively right. If it is to have both subjective rightness and objective rightness, then the reason can only pronounce that it has the former when it knows the reason why; and, this existing, it can only pronounce that it has the latter when it knows the end, or ultimate consummation of results. In each case there is a criterion according to which it pronounces. To disentangle these *criteria* and present them

clearly is my object. The recognition of this objective end as rational is a true intuition. Could it be known that an action having the true reason why makes infallibly for this objective end, then there would be a perfect intuition of its rightness. But this infallible surety is impossible. Therefore the intuition is only hypothetical. The degrees of approximation to objective rightness can only be ascertained by describing the consummate end. This is the imperative requirement of the science. The supreme good is not incapable of analysis, is not merely an abstract idea for the reason, but an ideal for the imagination as well. Later I shall endeavor to define and describe this more fully. Let me now revert to the examination of possible motive-springs, to discover which of them is needful to constitute subjective rightness. I use the term *motive-spring* because the word *motive* has been and is still commonly used to mean either the simple attractiveness of a possible action in view of its results, or else the intention,—*i. e.*, what is designed to be affected by it, whether near by or far off in space or time. By motive-spring I mean something other. There may be as many intentions as there are possible actions, as there are *attentions*. There may be as many motives, or immediate ends, as the mind sees fit to construct out of the existing material, which may become larger, and possible motives more numerous, with advancing culture and complexity,—while of motive-springs there can be but *four*. Let us consider any intelligible and familiar action to see this.

I meet a human brother in suffering and relieve him. I do this from sympathy,—an original affection or impulse of my nature, part and parcel of my organization and membership with my race, which makes it distressing for me to know and imagine his suffering. Here is one motive-spring, sometimes called a *momentum*, because it seems to find the subject passive,—comes of itself, without being called up by the will. I may, indeed, restrain myself from acting according to this sympathetic impulse, but I do not because I have formed a plan of living, a general maxim of regulation of my conduct, which is, to pass through this world enjoying as much comfort as I can securely and without uneasiness,—which plan is not contradicted by my acting from my sympathy, but which conceivably might be, and on account of which the sympathy is sometimes quieted. Here is a second motive-spring, half the time coinciding with the first, half the time contradicting and overcoming it. But, before deciding, when alternatives are before me, I ask myself, “Which is right?” “What is my duty?” “What is forbidden, and what is permitted, and what is urged by a law which I find involved in my consciousness, either inborn, or derived somehow, which commands my reverence and unconditional obedience?” Here, now, is a third motive-spring,—obligation,—reverence for a law absolute,—Kant’s categorical imperative, which may, in determining my action, coalesce with or overcome either or both the others. This law has been called autonomic, and is so in the sense that it is self-imposed,

admitted into the will; but is not self-created. It is part of my constitution as I find myself, as it has come from the divine wisdom and power; and only by thought labor, by analytical introspection, have I discovered its existence and its origin.

We may note here, however, another distinction between motive-springs and what are called motives or intentions. The latter are related to the will as the faculty of our activity,—the former are related to the will as the representative and the index of character, of the general drift of our being, and indicate the place and condition of the soul *quoad* a world of possibles, among which it may analyze and synthesize, dissociate, select, and combine, and make its own environment and the attractiveness thereof. This relation is either one or the other, or some combination and intermixture, of the three motive-springs above named, or, possibly, their intermixture with and subordination to a fourth.

On careful analysis we discover that we have not yet concluded the definition of the third motive-spring. Reverence for the moral law means nothing except as implying a lawgiver. A so-called law without sanctions does not deserve the name. That cannot be called a law where the results of obedience and disobedience are identical. The subjective distinction between mere states of consciousness, stopping short of all influence beyond itself or upon itself, is not a practical or moral one. Yet man cannot be thought as severed from all environment, and utterly out of relation to the physical and logical universe. His very states of consciousness

have a kind of objectivity. But the objective results of all activity must be different according as they are in obedience or disobedience to the imposed law. And if these are not ruled by chance or caprice, if there is method and uniformity in them, this method is a thought-relation, and they are under the control of an omnipotence and omniscience. There can be no moral law, then, without an all-powerful and wise lawgiver, who has made known the consequences of actions to some degree, that the foresight of these may determine the quality of the law-required action. Never was assertion more untrue than that of Kant that regard for these, fear or hope of these results, taints the excellence and purity of the motive-spring,—reverence for the law. To this I shall later revert. Now let me go on in the search after the fourth motive-spring.

A law then must have power behind it, and if that be more than mere physical force, it must have wisdom or intent behind it. As such merely, however, it can be thought to be arbitrary and tyrannical. If so, the reason may refuse reverence for such authority. How can it explain and justify its refusal? This intelligent power which imposes the sanctions must also be *just*, ere the will will yield its reverence. And the rational soul refuses to think of this power as other than just, because it knows that otherwise it itself would be nobler and higher in its own regard than the intelligent power itself. It sees that the less noble is not a cause adequate to account for the more noble. That the reason

will be satisfied with nothing less than justice or goodness is proof that the source from which it sprang is just and good. It cannot be figured, then, as an arbitrary and capricious will, but such a lawgiving will only as reason acquiesces in, as it acquiesces in truth and freedom from contradiction. The intelligent power must be just, and to bestow enjoyment or suffering, as involved in the consequences of actions, is not a matter of indifference to it. It must, therefore, *feel* as well as think; that is, feel delight and desire to have its feeling reciprocated. It must love; and if it loves it must create objects of love who can return its love, but this by a moral, and not a metaphysical or physical, necessity. Nay, love must be a part of its own definition (and this excuses the use, here, of the neuter pronoun). Thus is made possible another motive-spring, not mere reverence for the divine behest, even though it include acquiescence in the truth of an idea, or the recognized attractiveness for the imagination of its realization, but the response of person to Person, of heart to Heart,—of the whole complex humanity to the whole complex Divinity which it thus reflects and echoes.

Now, which of these four will reason recognize as the true motive-spring, without which it will not pronounce an action subjectively right, and therefore cannot judge it to be objectively right? Can it possibly stop with the first, or content itself with the second? Can it isolate the third, or must it yield assent to the fourth? The true reply is that *subjective rightness comes only from the fourth motive-*

spring ; and objective rightness from the combination and coalescence of all the four.

The requirements of subjective rightness and of objective rightness are not identical, since the latter covers a more extensive ground, which, however, comprises the former. Neither can be understood without the other. It is needful to demonstrate this, and to draw out the distinction more in detail.

CHAPTER V

SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE RIGHTNESS

UNDER the system of pure Intuitionism subjective rightness cannot be without objective rightness; and the latter to be such requires the former,—which may be admitted;—yet this system does not fully and rightly define objective rightness, which requires other elements. Under the Utilitarian system the former depends upon the latter; yet all the objective rightness that is possible may be without the other. If the sum of pleasure is largely added to by any action of a man, it is right, even though he have had no intention to accomplish any such result. The Utilitarian hardly sets himself the task of showing that the faulty or deficient intention is a mischief, or diminution of possible pleasure, overcoming in value the delight that, *ex hypothesi*, is so obviously accomplished. Generally he is quite ready to admit the objective rightness of such an action, even if done from a faulty intention, provided that intention be concealed, or favorably misunderstood. Thus, with many Utilitarian views objective and subjective rightness are not absolutely and permanently

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married, but may be at times legitimately divorced. With the Intuitionist, on the contrary, the two are inseparable. But a close scrutiny may show that the subjective rightness, supposing it to be derived from the fourth motive-spring, always is accompanied by, or includes, a dim or clearer vision of the absolute objectively right. To the apprehension of that we are moving, step by step. Intuitionism is true in so far as it sees that the objective rightness must make of the subjective rightness one fact with itself; because it is not the action that is regarded of worth, nor the resultant pleasure, but it is the character of the soul, regarded as a fountain out of which all activity may spring, and whose capacity for delight is unmeasurable. The overt action is not of worth, as such, because it may be caught up into the currents of Providence, and made to serve far other plans than the one intended. It is not the pleasure that is of value, but the character, or the capacity for endlessly varied, and new, and never-ending delight. Therefore subjective rightness must be insisted upon to constitute the objectively right. If the action is subjectively wrong, wrong in its intention, wrong in its motive-spring, the value of the soul is impaired, it has fallen short of its destiny, it has diminished its own capacity for enjoyment, and of imparting enjoyment to others. It is perpetuating a contradiction in the universe, diminishing the ideal sum of things, crushing down the capacity for development, adding to the mischief to be remedied. Notwithstanding any acknowledged result of pleasure, reason cannot be

satisfied. The recompense is not sufficient. The pleasure is purchased at too fearful a cost. As a member of an organism, physical, logical, ethical, this soul has revolted and set itself up independently, and is deranging the total structure. It is the unrighteous soul that is the lamentable entity, not the unrighteous action, or the diminished pleasure. For it is a fountain that grows fuller by its own outgoings. It grows larger the more it imparts, and smaller for all it withholds. It can shrink towards extinction, though it may never reach it, or it can expand till it fills the periphery of the universe. Therefore the subjective rightness of an action is a chief element of the objective rightness, though not the only element. Its objective rightness can only be fully known by One who can trace, or is master over, all its consequences.

No action, then, by its outward and visible features only, can be shown to be objectively right, inasmuch as a conceivable change of circumstances may make it more probable that it is wrong, or, at least, leave the question in doubt. If the intent have not been right, no consequences of good not intended can make it objectively right. But for carrying on the ordinary history of mankind it is important, as all confess, that there should be some objective standard of rightness, adequate, if not infallible, sufficient for use, though subject to fluctuations. Such a standard exists, whether derived from intuitions or from foresight of consequences; but with the changing conditions of human society it is in perpetual though not rapid flow, or change, and

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occasionally needs restatement. We may say that each generation requires its own particular code. What is important is to discover the unifying principle of all moral codes, which remains constant and the same, though the codes be amplified or corrected. For example, let us follow an identical principle through variant and sometimes conflicting codes. Thus we may see that the cardinal principle of morality remains unchangeable, and that the mind's apprehension of it may be called an intuition, while rules of morality set forth to be adopted as maxims are changeable, and sooner or later outlive their own harmony and consistency, and hence their obligation. This is true even of the famous, Kantian formula,—“ Act so that the maxim of thy conduct will be accepted by reason as law universal ”; unless, indeed, this maxim be no other than the cardinal principle itself of all morality; and even then it can only be saved from contradiction, and become practical, by outward guidance, by the aid of some interpreting light or influence.¹

“ Give to him that asketh of thee ” has been acknowledged to be a moral duty in some states of society. But in this form it cannot be accepted as law universal without amplification and explanation. “ Give to the sufferer when he is in real need, and when the giving of what thou givest robs no one else of a legitimate claim,” may have wider and longer application. But even in this form it may not have covered all possible cases, and cannot be adopted as law universal, inasmuch as it may have

¹ See Appendix A.

become known to the benevolent soul asked to be a donor that the relief of this need would work mischief, would create some deeper want. There is need, then, to adopt some more comprehensive formula still, *e. g.*, "It is a duty to help support human life, to relieve animal suffering, and therefore I ought to give food to the beggar at my door." But the situation changes. Beggary, in another state of society, is found to lead to vagrancy, and is discountenanced. In Dijon, a city in France, on nearly every street corner is a sign, "*Mendicité est interdite.*" Provision is made otherwise for the support and comfort of the needy, so that one may consider it his duty to refuse to give to him that asketh; yet the spirit of the precept remains steady and obligatory, only now one must take other means to support human life, or to alleviate suffering. And yet, again, this rule is found insufficient to be taken as a maxim fit for law universal,—for the circumstances may be such that one may deem it his duty to take away life, or to impart suffering, or to sustain institutions which inflict pain and take away life. For the security and increased enjoyment of the aggregate, then, it is contended that some may be made a sacrifice without infringing the law of right. Or, one may be legitimately put to pain with the hope that he may be led thereby to be less disposed to put others to pain. If this opinion be correct, and the cardinal principle of morality is not infringed by such action, then it would seem that the legitimacy of such action is dependent upon the foresight of the consequences

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to the general weal, and that we are using the Utilitarian method, and acting upon its principle, viz. : that the objective end and rule of action, to be called moral, is to add to the aggregate of enjoyment and diminish the aggregate of suffering.

But we are soon disturbed in the apparent acceptance of this method, and discover that the question, as a practical one, is still left in doubt, if we ask the question, "When?" To what point in the future shall we extend our calculation of the aggregate of enjoyment or of suffering? How can we balance present delights and agonies with future ones; and is the knowledge of past agonies and delights to be thrown aside as not affecting the estimate? And having formed some imagination of a future as affected by our present conduct, how soon are we to become weary of pushing our inquiry farther ahead? Where shall we stop,—with the present year or decade or century, or with some remoter period arbitrarily chosen according to one's confidence in the work of forecasting? If the inquiry is to be limited to the effect of action upon human happiness in this life only, there seems no greater fitness that any future generation should be happy than that the present one should be. So many disturbing influences may come in to derange the best-laid intentions, that one must have a faith in results diminishing as he extends his inquiries. Nature is hostile; accidents are frequent; new disorders make their appearance and give birth to abnormal and diseased instincts; cataclysms are possible—now and then they do occur on a small scale; they may

occur on a grander scale, and make all human calculations vain. How could we expect to keep the human race, or any large portion of it, steady in the business of regulating its action by any such foresight of consequences? Each one, the Utilitarian philosopher included, will have to make the calculation how best to secure *his own* enjoyment without diminishing that of others to an extent too alarming; and if, now and then, he has had to harm a soul that was in his way, no one will have any right to complain; or, rather, there will be no meaning to any such complaint. There will be, no doubt, some good rules that will suit multitudes, some that will suit a few, or only one,—hardly any that will suit all. As rules of prudence all will have the same validity,—stand upon the same ground. By no reasoning whatever can we deduce any obligation or binding force. The word “duty” here is without distinctive meaning, and is borrowed from the old Intuitionism.

Yet this judgment or feeling of obligation is a haunting one, and man cannot get rid of it. Its influence has not been weakened by all the argumentation of the philosophers. It demands to be explained, and cannot be successfully explained away, and rejected as a distinctive word. The attempt has been made to derive it from some generalization of prudential rules made in the early history of the human race, the memory of which has faded out, so that it appears in the form of an inborn instinct, and is transmitted by heredity. But the argument cannot be made plausible. There

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are too many hypothetical links. We cannot follow the stages of any process of spontaneous mental movement that will lead to such an outcome. I find it utterly impossible to conceive how it should have reached the present form in which we find it in human consciousness. But even if it were true, and its genesis and history could be traced in this way, it would not impair the validity and truth of the form in which it now exists in human consciousness. If from prudence it has enlarged the scope of prudence and become rational, it has thereby become obligation. It is what was implicit in prudence, what it has developed into. It has become obligation in the sense in which the intuitionist holds it. We have no right to reject this *dictum* of consciousness, so unique, but must carefully consider its meaning, must analyze the judgment, and seek the ground of explanation of the feeling.

CHAPTER VI

OBLIGATION AS A JUDGMENT AND A FEELING—THE MORAL IDEAL

OBLIGATION implies a law for free agents, imposed by a Power which is, of course, also an Intelligence, and therefore adequate to supply a sufficient sanction, *i. e.*, to rule or apportion the results of obedience or disobedience. A law self-originated and self-imposed cannot create obligation, has no authority. Kant's autonomy of the will means something more than that the law is self-imposed by the individual. It is the assent of the individual mind to the law imposed by the common reason. It is not sufficient to say that this is merely an agreement among human intelligences to think thus and so. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that they are compelled to think thus and so. Therefore the law, and the reason which upholds it, must be referred to the source of this reason, which has made it what it is, either arbitrarily, or in accordance with the necessary constitution of the created universe. The more, then, this fact of obligation is examined, the more clearly it will be seen that the form which it has in human consciousness requires

the existence of sanctions, and that it cannot be violated with impunity. The law, then, requires the postulate of an Omnipotence and Omniscience which rules these sanctions; therefore, of a Lawgiver,—of God, indeed.

If we ask whether the will of the Lawgiver thus imposed upon the subject is arbitrary, and therefore possible to be changed; or, instead, is founded upon the essential being and nature of the Lawgiver, is an expression and manifestation of the same, and is therefore unchangeable,—we may say that the *onus probandi* lies altogether with him who makes the first assertion. There has been in the history of mankind no change in the unifying principle of the moral law. It commands what it always did. Therefore we infer that there can be none. There has been, in the history of the universe, no change in biological, chemical, or mechanical laws. Science avails itself of this fact, and only exists because of it. But the word “law” here means something other than it does when it is used as binding free intelligences. It means, simply, uniform modes of motion. But in the hierarchy of laws there has been and is a certain order, which may oscillate backward, but in precisely the reverse order, and this reverse order may itself be called a “law.” Here it is used in a sense intermediate, and this advancing order may be seen to display the law of development, and thus there is in it a hint or prophecy of the moral law. Chemical law overcomes mechanical, but there is no scientific, and no *a priori* evidence that it will forever do so. Biological law

dominates both the others, but as yet with only a transient dominion. If we ask the question, whether, following this analogy, the moral law can or will suspend the action of the three lower, or dominate them according to its requirements, this is one to which I am endeavoring to supply an answer, and the scope and conclusion of my argument will in due time be seen. But there is no evidence anywhere in the story of the universe of capricious methods and interferences, and therefore no warrant for the assertion that the will of the Lawgiver is arbitrary. Even the rioting of the spirit of life, with its result of luxuriance, throws forth blossoms of beauty, showing that it is ruled by a fixed design. Even the cataclysms and destructions are not without meaning, and increasing knowledge goes to show that they are but steps towards a more excellent development. A capricious will in the universe would make all investigation of facts and all conclusions therefrom nugatory and nonsensical. There is then no analogy to support the thesis that the will of the moral Lawgiver can undergo change. One feels in it the same confidence, and greater confidence than he does in the uniformity of nature; since he may regard this last as *means* only, and the result of observance of moral law as an *end*. Unless there be such an end to which the lower laws are subservient, it is not worth while to think, or even to live. Nothing has any absolute importance. If we exist in a realm of soulless forces alone we may disappear from the planet by an accident like that by which we entered it. The seeming continuity

of the past is but an accident, and has no absolute meaning. Only the living soul of it, the thought and the rejoicing in it, gives it meaning.

If, then, the will of the moral Lawgiver is unchangeable, it is because it expresses the nature of that Lawgiver, which must be consistent with itself. To think that consistency rightly, then, must be of the highest consequence, for possibly we may think a necessity there that is as untrue, that is as much of a delusion, as to think this will a mere will of caprice. Whether the key rightly to understand it, and therefore to understand anything and everything else, is any such word or thought as *necessity*, and is not, rather, no other word or thought than *freedom*, is what I am endeavoring to establish. If, then, the law be an expression of the nature of the Being from whom all things are derived, it should measurably reveal one of the essential characteristics of that nature, and the ideal end of its own expression or manifestation. In showing us what *ought* to be, it must show us what *would* be, were the forces and tendencies of all existence to have free play, and not be interfered with and diverted from their ideal purpose by the free acts of self-determining beings, so far like the source from which they have sprung.

In what shape, then, does the moral law reveal itself? How can we comprehend it? What is its unifying principle which gives the intended character to all activity? If this can be singled out and defined, then a test, or trustworthy criterion of human action, is not a hopeless quest. If anything

else than the true unifying principle be taken in its stead, we must wander hopelessly, and the guiding star will be extinguished when it is most needed.

That conduct, then, that modification or possibility of consciousness, and that alone, will be acknowledged to be for all time obligatory which is seen to be required by the central attribute, or character, of the Lawgiver; and which unmistakably tends to make real the ideal result, in which alone reason can acquiesce, and which, therefore, may be taken to be the Final Cause of all existence. This is the meaning of obligation, so far as it is a judgment, viz.: that there is an ultimate condition, adjustment, arrangement, of all the elements of concrete existence which the Omnipotence of the universe is accomplishing, which alone will satisfy human reason. It finds a contradiction in anything short of the perfect realization of this ideal. Whatever is in the way of this perfection must be removed. Whatever surely leads toward it, or hastens it, must be done. Exactly what will hasten it is an inquiry that will receive perpetually fluctuating answers till the end is approximately reached. While the replies may, in the main, be given with confidence, they often must be given with doubt and in uncertainty. Obligation will remain, and the consciousness of *duty*, as long as there is anything lacking to the entire moral satisfaction. And this moral satisfaction will be found to coalesce with, or rather to blend into and become, an æsthetic satisfaction. That state of things which is the end of the moral law, the good made real and eternal, is *beautiful*. Obligation will

disappear as a judgment when the end is reached, when the law turns into spontaneity, when sublimity has subsided into perfect and eternal beauty.

But, in consciousness, obligation is a *feeling* as well as a judgment. This feeling is the indication that the law has sanctions, and that the Author of the law is the Author of the physical universe. The peculiarities of the feeling which accompanies the judgment of obligation are both *a priori* and *a posteriori*. The apprehension of the moral idea in any shape, however clear or obscure, however simple or amplified, is accompanied by a feeling that has no better name than *reverence*. In its simplest and purest form it is identical with the grateful satisfaction that we feel in the contemplation of what is judged to be *truth*. But, concretely, it receives new elements when the law is apprehended as implying a Lawgiver; and still newer ones when the possibility of a personal relation with the Author of the law is revealed, or becomes an element in the consciousness. Thus reverence for truth becomes reverence for God. In this form morality is necessarily religion, and the feeling inevitable is the basis of worship. But actually this is soon mingled with other modes of feeling which arise because the law has sanctions. These elements of the complex feeling may vary somewhat with differing experience, but ordinarily the judgment of obligation is accompanied by the feeling of apprehension on account of violation of the law, or of hope of well-being from its observance. This has come from the discovery early made in all human experience that the violation

of any law, physical, mental, or social, sooner or later brings discord and suffering, insomuch that the existence of suffering is taken to be evidence of violated law somewhere and at some time. The inference is drawn that the violation of moral law must have similar result of suffering somewhere and at some time. Thus the suspicion, belief, or conviction, which the human being can never entirely extirpate, that well-being, immunity from suffering, lies in the way and at the end of obedience to law, and that ill-being and suffering come from its violation or neglect, causes the feeling of apprehension to mingle with the feeling of reverence. The truth of the old adage, "The gods grind surely, though slowly, and they grind exceeding small," comes shudderingly at times into every human soul. It is *felt* that justice, though it seems to accomplish itself so slowly to our observation, is not impotent, but patient, is not to be vanquished by our puny oppositions, but will have its way in the end. It will follow, then, that suffering and sacrifice cannot cease as long as fulfilment of the requirements of the law is incomplete.

The law which obliges exists, then, in and for human reason, obscurely or more or less clearly seen. No one is without it who is above the mere animal and whose mind and body are sane. It is part of the natural furniture of human intelligence, as much so as the forms of space and time, and the categories of the understanding. When scrutinized, analyzed, it is found to hint of our origin and our destiny, if not more than to hint. In the rude mind

it exists in dim outline, but that outline never varies, though there may be endless ramifications, though there be constant filling up and bursting forth into light, and occasional obscurations. It is like the picture of a magic-lantern, growing in completeness and distinctness, in richness and meaning, with intenser and continued light, yet upon which something opaque can be superimposed. But, regarding this, the rude mind judges, it knows not how. It makes a spontaneous comparison. It lays, as it were, the projected action upon the dim model as one geometrical figure is laid upon another for purposes of demonstration. He may have had from others wrong reports of the filling up of this ideal picture, which he has accepted as trustworthy and incorporated into his thought, and thus may make wrong moral decisions; or he may somehow be aided to see his own eternal idea shining through this overlaying, and thus may correct his judgment; and hence we never despair that the moral judgment of any man may be set right. We act, all of us, upon the faith that all moral judgments that are astray may be corrected. It is the task of the moral philosopher rightly to describe the ideal standard, to help his fellows to uncover it, and to illuminate it.

There is thus photographed upon every human soul a picture of the perfect state, of what was in the divine mind in creating human souls; but a photograph indistinct at first, yet destined with experience and under culture to start forth perpetually into new meanings. This photograph gives the essential element of the ideal standard of what

ought to be. It is no other than the picture of a commonwealth of love, where each intelligence finds his own well-being and bliss in the well-being and bliss of every other, and of the totality. It is the implicit recognition that such a commonwealth is an organism, so that the perfection of the whole is needed to bring out the full potentiality of every member; where, too, there is no contradiction nor impediment in the environment, where there is no monopoly of anything, where everything is fully shared because there is an exhaustless supply of everything that is desirable; where knowledge grows forever with the spontaneous activity which seeks it; where there is no *hyle*, no opposing and rebellious matter, but where everything is fluent and subservient, and can be wrought up infinitely into enriching and beautiful creations.¹

When the microscopic power of the human intellect is brought to bear upon this photograph these implications start into the vision, and the gasping requirement of unity is satisfied. The reason rests, and aspiration takes its place.

Everything short of this full picture made real is so far negative and therefore wrong. Just so far as the central principle on which this ethical, mental, and physical perfection depends is attained by any soul as its steady or fluctuating quality, just so far is that soul *good*, and the issues of that fountain *right*. Omnipotence can weave the results in its own time into objective rightness, and must be trusted to do that, for man never attains perfect

¹ See Appendix A.

insight of the results of the means he uses for his end, and is often left in the dark; and it is best for him that he should be.

The central principle, I have said, on which the perfection and eternity of this commonwealth depend, is *love*. And love, to be love, must be *free*, must be thought as free, can exist by no physical or metaphysical necessity, must find its own necessity in its perfection. Perfect freedom is necessity, but to think necessity rightly it must be thought and imagined as perfect freedom. Therefore love, in a creature that is to be developed, cannot exist *per saltum*. The ethical perfection cannot be assumed at the start, and thought as dragging mental and physical perfection lingeringly after it. Rather, all the movements of the threefold process must proceed *pari passu*. This perfection can only be reached by a process of development, and therefore man as an individual, and humanity as a race, and any intended ethical commonwealth, must have a history, must be born or begin, and grow, and be tried, and strengthen itself by new ventures, must overcome difficulties, must not only be right or innocent, but must become strong and steady,—must be sublime for a time in order to be beautiful at last. It must attain such strength as will make it securely in order to be perfectly right and eternally good. Moral perfection is, then, more than moral rectitude. It is spiritual strength as well. Even if there had been no moral evil, love still would have had a history, still would have needed trial and exercise, still would have had to acquire strength by

overcoming opposition, by subduing the physical environment, and by resisting temptation. Even we, with our intellects, can see that the highest spiritual dignity cannot be acknowledged in a creature that comes perfect from its Maker's hands. Rather, to reach that, it must create itself in its ultimate character, must urge itself through difficulties, must vanquish ignorance, and overcome physical restraints.

While the task has been immensely complicated and rendered difficult by the appearance of moral evil in the universe, the necessity for the achievement of a good-will, of a will strong in its goodness, is still upon mankind. He is a gladiator in the arena,—a moral athlete, who has enemies to vanquish. He may seem to himself to be meeting with no success, yet the struggle is making him stronger all the while. He may despair of the result of liberation, yet even this despair may nerve his effort at resistance. Though his physical and mental imperfections, though the falsehood of things as they seem, may be loosening upon him, and becoming ready to be sloughed off, yet they must seem to exist in their opposition still, in order that he may exercise his fullest strength; and the *acme* of his attainment in this regard will be the signal and the condition for their disappearance.

CHAPTER VII

CONSCIENCE¹

THERE have been various disputes about the origin, nature, and function of *Conscience*, some of which, I think, would have been needless had the same name been always given to the same thing. Certainly when one moral philosopher declares that conscience is infallible, and not susceptible of education and improvement, and another declares that it may and does frequently go wrong, and that it is a chief human duty to educate and improve it, they cannot be referring to the same thing. Indeed, the word has been used in half a dozen different meanings. That I may clear up this confusion, if possible, let me show, at least, my own use of the word, and see if it is possible to agree to give and confine the name to an identical concept.

First, we may call by this name the faculty which acknowledges the presence of the moral idea or ideal which, I have said, exists in dim outline in every human soul, contemplates it, and admits it as

¹ A fuller disquisition on "Conscience," by the present author, may be found in the American supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Stoddart's edition,

true and binding. That one sees it more distinctly, and understands its requirements more completely, than another, may be true; yet he is not on that account any more aware of its existence, or more firmly convinced of its truth. If we call this faculty "conscience" simply because it sees or knows the presence of the moral idea, it is so far an intuition, incapable of diminution or increase in clearness, and therefore, as such merely, not to be cultured. Since, however, the outline may be filled up and break into ramifications, and thus the idea be illumined, we might call this process of elaboration and distinctness, culture or education, by this name. And if, thereby, the conscious soul improves in the penetrating power of its vision, before which new contents of the ideal picture are continually or occasionally starting into light, then, in this sense, conscience may be educated or cultured.

What is to be noticed here is, that, thus far, the mind is not occupied by any inquiry about the rightness or wrongness of a contemplated action, but solely with the acknowledgment that there *is* a law of obligation, which law consists in requiring correspondence of any and all voluntary action to the ideal norm, which is intuited and contemplated.

The rudest savage is quite as certain of the existence of this ideal, though in dim outline, as the most cultured philosopher is of the existence of his fuller picture. Indeed, the unsophisticated mind never denies its presence. It is only the cultured mind that can be led to do that. But another cultured mind, because it can give reasons for its

acknowledgment, and attempt a description of the ideal, is not on that account any surer than the savage that there is a criterion, however obscure, by which he judges actions, or rather dispositions and characters, which he cannot think away, whereby he is able to make a distinction between them and call them by separate names. If "conscience," then, be the name of the faculty which intuits this idea, it cannot be educated or improved. If the name be given to the power to fill up the outline of the ideal, it may be cultured; and there is no need of any dispute other than a verbal one.

But the name is constantly and more commonly given to something other, viz.: to the mental process whereby we scrutinize proposed or intended actions, their motives, and their motive-spring, in order to compare them with the ideal standard, and thus to characterize them. In this process it is evident that there may be all degrees of skill, chiefly or largely dependent upon the ability, native and acquired, to trace the consequences of these actions. If "conscience" be the name of the faculty which makes the comparison, and we call this activity by this name,—for this reason and no other, viz.: that it makes the comparison,—then it does not appear that any degrees of quickness in making this comparison necessarily exist; and so, with this definition, conscience cannot be educated. But if the characters of two men differ in the respect that one is *apt* to make this comparison, and the other *shuns* the making of it, and we call by the name "conscience" the disposition to admit to

the light the comparison and the judgment, or to thrust it aside, and we have a wide-awake, or a sleeping, "conscience,"—then the character may, in this respect be improved. But this hardly can be called the education of a faculty, but rather an endeavor to increase the disposition to use it. Such an endeavor respects the whole moral nature of the man, and the word "conscience," if given to this, would be in too large a definition to induce clearness of thought and precise distinctions. Yet the word is constantly used in this elastic sense.

If, again, the activity and skill of the mind in tracing consequences, and the consequent better understanding of the action to be compared and judged, be called "conscience," then it is evident that it is susceptible of all degrees of proficiency; and its proficiency will depend not only upon largeness of mind, acquired knowledge, and mental culture, but upon its own practice, upon its constant *habit* of making such scrutiny for comparison; and also upon the conformity of its habitual actions and dispositions to the requirements of the moral law. Obedience to the behests of the law makes the inquiring mind keen-sighted and sensitive, while neglect and forgetfulness dull its vision and sensibility. A man is thus, or is not, called a conscientious man; and this seems a just use of the word, if not absolutely precise, and one difficult to dislodge.

But skill, thus acquired, in tracing consequences of actions and dispositions, and in reaching results of truth and value by comparing the action thus defined with the ideal norm, while dependent measurably

upon the degree of clearness and fulness of the moral idea or standard which the man may have attained, is by no means identical with it, or runs accurately *pari passu* with it. There are two things to be compared. Seeing one clearly by no means necessitates seeing the other rightly. What I mean will be presently seen. Now we may notice that thus two more meanings to the word "conscience" have arisen from the fact that we make comparison of a scrutinized action with an ideal standard.

Or, the word, as I hinted just now, may be used to cover the entire soul passivity and activity, and a man may say that conscience may be educated, or that it cannot be educated, as he fixes his attention for the time being upon one or the other element in the whole complex situation or procedure.

Thus far we have been dealing with the *judgment*; and Kant's definition may be adopted as the most expedient. Conscience is the "reason morally judging." It is reason concentrated upon practice, upon concrete actions. And as one man is more skilful and trustworthy in detecting error and finding truth in speculation than another, so he may be in pronouncing verdicts of right or wrong.

But I have said that all mind-activity is also soul-activity. All judgment is accompanied by or enveloped in *feeling*; and as obligation is the name both of a judgment and a feeling, so the word "conscience" may be, and is, given to the feeling which accompanies any and every part of the abovementioned mind-activity. And the feeling,

as we have noticed, gets its complexion from observation, experience, habit, as well as from contemplation of the law. It may fluctuate, may subside into ashes and seem to be extinct, or it may blaze forth with terrible results. The apprehension of suffering for violated law comes as a *threat* with more or less vehemence. When we accuse ourselves and fear consequences, we call not only the accusation (which is a judgment), but the fear and the agony, "conscience." Or the reverse feeling of complacency, accompanied by the hope or the conviction that future well-being has been secured, or rendered more likely, by our conduct, we call by the same name.

Or if, in comparing ourselves with the ideal character, we are so distressed at the discrepancy that the æsthetic sense is violated, the feeling of self-abhorrence thus aroused we call "conscience." "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," was an utterance from such a state of mind. When one has been somehow stimulated to make this comparison, and reaches a condition of feeling like this, we call it an awakened conscience.

In a truly scientific ethical nomenclature, there ought to be different names for the distinct modes of mental activity, as there are names well agreed upon for these distinct feelings.

But now, among these meanings which have been given to the word, which one shall we select and constantly use it in only this sense? My opinion is that the best use will be to confine it strictly to the mind's activity when busy in comparing a proposed

action well understood with the moral norm, and its judgment in deciding upon its agreement or discrepancy. In this sense it is a complex faculty, —not intuition, though implying it. And in this sense it may be educated, cultured, and improved. We should find another word to express the disposition to apply a projected action to the norm, admitting of more or less. We are only confusing our thinking if we speak of a good conscience or a bad conscience. These are attributes of the soul only, in its total character, or the trend of its being.

The moral requirement, though existing for every rational being, so that there is no increase in the surety of its existence, can, however, not only exist as a dim outline and be illumined by culture and by habitual obedience, but after being thus made more distinct, it can again be obscured and caricatured, though never entirely obliterated, since the impulse and the susceptibility of recuperation always remain. The thinking process, even here, though having covered up with an artificial something the moral ideal, though having substituted manufactured implements, kaleidoscopic rather than microscopic, for the naïve vision, yet always contains within itself the possibility of correction. For the idea is deathless, and the artificial covering will sooner or later break in pieces and let the idea shine through. There are numberless historical illustrations of this, which I do not care to adduce, but the philosophical explanation is this:

Speculation is always busy in searching for and finding a First Principle, and it necessarily thinks

of everything else as issuing from that, as dependent upon that, as unified by that,—or as somehow related to that, and therefore requiring that for its explanation. Man, therefore, always a little of a speculator or philosopher, judges of himself in the light of his First Principle. He cannot but think that he is one thing or another, that he is ultimately to be one thing or another, or that he ought to be one thing or another, according as he thinks his First Principle to be one thing or another. If he have persuaded himself that the First Principle is matter, or force, or matter and force, whatever these words may mean to him, then the norm for him, which expresses what he is or can be, is only one of these. He is or can be only such an outcome as is implied in his conceptions of matter and force. If he is the victim of such a speculation, the moral idea stamped upon the wax of his nature is clogged and distorted. The fine spiritual characteristics of it are, by a strange and unwieldy phraseology, tortured into modes of matter and force. Avowedly the man will have no higher aims than those the nature and potentialities of that which he has admitted as his First Principle, furnish; or, if he has, it will be in spite of his theory, and because the original predisposition of his nature is too strong to be permanently, or without interruption, entangled in the meshes of a false theory. But avowedly and habitually he will not aim to be anything higher than what he thinks the First Principle to be. If he does, at times, contradict his ordinary maxim, and aim higher, it is because the aboriginal impression is

not obliterated in spite of the overlaying of his theory.

In the same way might be shown that any false or imperfect idea of God,—of a First Principle admitted to be personal,—or of His character, which he has reached by his speculation, will bring about for the time being a false ethical standard. Man will always aim to be, when he aims his highest, what he thinks God to be. Just here Ethic runs into Theology, and requires theological postulates. No true Ethic can do without them, as Kant admitted. The unbiased mind, dealing with moral questions, inevitably finds itself at length *here*, and nowhere else.

Some biographers of the poet, Edgar A. Poe, have declared that he was without the consciousness of moral responsibility. He would have been less than human if this were so. It might be otherwise easily disproven, and it is in his poem, "Ulalume." Something supremely attractive beckons a soul onward to enjoy its beauty and its peace.

"To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up, through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But the inward monitor stirs with its misgivings.

"But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—'Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust;—

Oh, hasten !—oh, let us not linger !
Oh, fly !—let us fly !—for we must.’
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.”

Conscience is awakened, and her sharp agonies begin.
But the deluding Imagination again replies, seduced
to cross this Lethe, leaving its sorrow behind, into
the supernal peace.

“This is nothing but dreaming ;
Let us on by this tremulous light !
Let us bathe in this crystalline light !
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night :—
See ! it flickers up the sky through the night !
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright.”

And so the soul yields to the seduction once more.

“Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom.”

But forgetfulness of past sin cannot be so easily
purchased.

“We passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb ;

And I said, 'What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?'
She replied, 'Ulalume—Ulalume—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!'

"Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere."

The idea that reason reveals cannot be obliterated. The sense of obligation cannot be utterly dulled. And so, ever, remorse conducts back to, or implies that the First Principle is, an enthroned Justice. To turn into the other pathway will cause its face to brighten into the lineaments of Love.

Thus, then, if actions are to be truly estimated, the vision of the moral idea must not be obscured and corrupted by any false theory. Could we induce all thinking men to agree in the description of the ideal state of things, the final synthesis, to which human free-will, if obeying its profoundest instinct, would tend, and to hold this to be the standard by which all actions should be judged, then we should have an Ethic or Moral Philosophy that would easily and soon solve all the problems of Moral Science. Rapid, and with little liability to mistake, would be the application of the criterion to the changing conditions of human life, the formulation of rules of duty, and the cultivation of the fine spiritual instinct that would divine the solution of any moral question, when the prescribed rules were inadequate to determine it.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MORAL IDEA — ITS UNIFYING PRINCIPLE — CRITIQUE OF THE EVOLUTIONARY SCHEME

MY thesis, then, is this:—that the abstract action has no moral worth or character; that the moral worth or unworth is in the soul from which it springs, and is determined by the motive-spring; that the true motive-spring constitutes subjective rightness, even though the soul does not fully understand its own action, *i. e.*, its consequences, immediate and ultimate; that we cannot discover its objective rightness except as it is related to the ultimate result. To be objectively right its result must constitute an element of the *bonum supremum*, whence, as a *sine qua non*, is the *bonum consummatum*. And this *bonum supremum* is no aggregate of actions, but an organism of free souls, which are fountains of harmonious activities, and where no moral distinctions exist. Till that ideal state of things is realized, actions may be, without doubt, subjectively right, but can only approximately share the objective rightness. Some, if not all, come short of absolute rightness, because done with an imperfect foresight of consequences; and because,

at the best, these consequences have to be availed of and harmonized by the omniscient Omnipotence. These consequences are perishable and may be dominated otherwise than according to the subjective intent. The result which is not perishable is the commonwealth of loving souls, which are fountains of righteousness. These, when unified by relation to the First Principle, constitute the basis of the *bonum supremum*. Thus objective rightness requires the perfection of the religious relation to be complete. Other elements need to be added to constitute the *bonum consummatum*.

Thus it appears that all shortcoming of the ultimate ideal realized has an element of imperfection, and may be said to be so far wrong. Every concrete action, then, may be of a mixed character. It may be right so far as its motive-spring is concerned, —wrong so far as that motive-spring has not sufficient strength, and causes only reluctant yielding. In the latter case it has really been effaced as a motive-spring. It may be right so far as there is intent to bring about the ideal good, and wrong so far as one cannot see, or control, results, and thereby may be mistaken as to its remoter tendency.

It does not follow from this that moral evil is only a negation, and consists in shortcoming of the absolute good, —as some have drawn the inference. That may be true as to physical evil; but moral evil is the name of a certain relation which the conscious will bears to the norm,—the law,—or to the supreme will. Moral good is also the name of a relation, and the one is just as positive as the other. The ideal

state—the good realized, the commonwealth of loving souls, with environment adjusted and correspondent—is also a positive. The ideal evil, pure evil (which can be thought but not imagined), is also a positive, for it can reside only in an existing soul, out of harmony, in isolation and spiritual independence. The notion that moral evil is negative is only comprehensible by holding that the evil soul, persisting in being such, must go on necessarily to its own annihilation, *i. e.*, that no existence can be permanent if out of harmony. I will not argue that question here, but say that he who is unwilling to admit such a conclusion cannot consistently, or even comprehensibly, hold to the mere negativity of moral evil.

To return: all shortcoming of the ideal of a commonwealth of loving souls, with environment correspondent, is, so far, wrong, and reason cannot acquiesce in any such state of things any more than it can in a contradictory proposition. From this it would seem to follow that this constitution of things, *the bonum consummatum*, is that towards which the universe of our knowledge is tending. The very fact that man *desires* this is proof that his nature, had it been left to flow according to its original predisposition, would strain towards it. I do not know that he is more certain of anything than he is that such a state of things is the one most desirable and alone satisfying. And the naïve practical inference is that his part is not to thwart it, and it will be brought about. All *trust* whatever assumes this shape.

Whenever, then, a moral question is raised, there

is always a reference to this ideal state of things, either deliberate or spontaneous. Whenever it is necessary to go deeper than the *communis sensus* under which one lives, and examine *de novo* a moral question, this is the comparison that is made, with a more or less clear vision of this loving commonwealth. Other names have been used for it, incorrect or incomplete, since they needed definition and could not come within the sphere of imagination and feeling;—such as “perfection,” “truth,” “the nature of things,” “universal order,” etc. Whereas the other at once is recognized by the simplest capacity, and imagination is at home in it; for it can supply the physical and intellectual elements that are to be superadded to the ethical one to constitute the absolute perfection and make this existence rich and full beyond description.

But the question arises, What degree of approximation to this ideal state of things is possible at the point of time when the question is raised, and how shall or should human conduct be regulated under the existing circumstances? This is an inquiry which must have a different answer for each period; and the determination of the life-plan must be different for each individual who would bring it about. Therefore a perfect code of rules of duty cannot be formulated. There is something idiosyncratic about every situation, and it is never repeated. Casuistry is an endless science (if it deserves the name), whose rules are capable of such minute and numberless divisions and subclassifications that they are frittered away into dimness and nonentity. Man's

conscience often tires of this artificial offer of help, and feels that there ought to be a shorter road. And sometimes it happens, indeed, that in revolting from such self-anatomization, he takes a wrong road and plunges into antinomianism, or throws himself blindly into the arms of authority and lets his conscience sleep.

What complicates the moral inquiry so greatly is that multitudes will not conform their lives to the moral ideal end, but construct ends of their own which reach not beyond the immediate, or not very remote, future. They will try, first, these experiments, hoping that they are not inconsistent with the supreme end, or neglecting or fearing to think about it at all, and often proposing to return if the experiment does not succeed but lands them in a moral contradiction. Thus, to say the least, they lose time, and make their task the harder.

I have said that unless a question of duty difficult to solve is raised, men live in habitual acquiescence with the common rules of morality. There is usually a quick reference to the received maxims of the society in which they live; and these may have taken shape, too, from the precepts of the received religion. When a case occurs where the ordinary rules do not apply, then the man either begins to think *de novo*, and is really groping after the original foundation and authority of the rules themselves; or he is very apt to avail himself of the skill of any expert or one who claims to be such. For such a man a clear definition of the moral idea is a real help, preserving him from being victimized by errors,

and intensifying the spirit of obedience. Any doubt that he may have that there is not in his own mind a trustworthy criterion of subjective rightness has not been natural, but has come from the overlying and resultant confusion of some false theory. These lie all about—so many pitfalls to catch the unwary. But if the soul is one that strains towards the ideal good, it sooner or later escapes these snares. The loving soul has an instinct that often serves when all rules are vain, and often it has no other dependence.

It has been claimed by some psychologists that some instincts, and more of them than is usually admitted, are voluntary in their origin. We may acknowledge that the instinct of the loving soul spoken of above has been nourished, and in some sense created, by voluntary acts of love. It has likewise been contended that the moral decisions that seem so immediate as to be called instinctive had their origin in voluntary prudential acts. At risk of repetition, let me give this a somewhat longer examination.

It is claimed, then, that what we now call moral judgments, with their accompanying feelings, had their origin in prudential discoveries made early in the history of the human race; that these prudential actions had become so habitual that their maxims came to seem undeniable truths; that these mental habits, descending through many generations, whose history flows in the darkness, have come to seem instincts rather than memories. To be sure, this change of form cannot be traced and proven *a*

posteriori, but it can be thought, and receives probability from the growing evidence for Evolution as an universal solvent and the key to all mysteries. But even though it could be shown or rendered probable that the first judgments distinguishing actions arose out of prudential discoveries, which themselves had their origin in the instinct of preservation, — the animal instinct to seek enjoyment and to avoid pain and danger, all this growing more complex with development, — it would not follow that the form which at length they had taken was false or delusive; it would not follow that, if this instinct has conditioned the growing clearness of the intuition of the good and right, this is not a true intuition, that the form which it now takes, of a law of obligation, is not its true form, which better explains it than its earlier form. Certainly what the present human consciousness, so far developed, and having its implications brought to light, yields on examination is more instructive than what it would have yielded in the early stages of its history. Men have, universally, more confidence in the result of their present introspection than they have in the alleged result of any scrutiny of the past. This is shown by the fact that if that which the theory under examination alleges was the early form of moral experience — viz. : that men avoid all pain and seek all enjoyment — were proposed now as a general maxim, the existing reason would refuse to sanction such a maxim. It is not a statement of an universal rule, sufficient to be a guide, if there is anything whatever limiting individual self-will. And if the maxim be said to

mean that all pain may be avoided, and all pleasure sought, provided the effort and search are not at the cost of increased pain and diminished pleasure somewhere else, reason asks, "Why this proviso?" and we have seen that no satisfactory reply can be given to this question, unless there be a law of obligation having sanctions. Even those who formulated the first rules of prudence showed thereby the conviction that pain, ignorance, conflict of wills, are in themselves undesirable, *i. e.*, contradict an ideal; and that enjoyment, knowledge, harmony, mutual help, are desirable. As giving value to human souls, they should be sought. If they are not sought it is at the peril of suffering for neglect. Thus prudence itself is in no necessary conflict with the law that reason sanctions and imposes.

In all the changes and growth of human consciousness there must have been constant elements. Something, then, that man now does to decide a question of rightness he must always have done. We have no right to assert otherwise without evidence, and this is wanting to show that he has so changed as to have become permanently victimized by a delusion. The attempt to show that a rule of expediency, which is not obligatory, can at length come to take this form and seem obligatory, has not been successful; and can no more be successful than the attempt to identify a sensation with a concept. It is only a preliminary condition for the clarification of the idea. If the human mind finds now in itself an idea, conformity to which is imperative, under sanctions which bring apprehension of

penalty,—if it thus finds a law, the law must always have been, and the first rules of expediency did not turn into their contradictories, but were themselves brought to the test and modified by the law which they had helped to bring to light. I regard it as beyond the possibility of disproof that the essentials of human experience are uniform; and that man as he now is, in the highly developed state, can be studied with truer results than by any possible search into his history, or groping after the *psycho-genesis* of his moral impressions; though I by no means undervalue these.

Man is an imaginative being, and has always made ample use of this faculty in forming moral judgments. Indeed, its use is indispensable. He has imagined a state of things towards which his nature may go out unrestrained either from without or within. If there is restraint there is the feeling, which implies a judgment, that there is wrong somewhere, though he may easily mistake in deciding what and where it is. If there is no restraint from without or within, there is the feeling, which implies the judgment, of right, though this, too, is not infallible. It is also correct to say that imagination has function in determining these distinctions. These names of faculties are only names of the soul itself, busy at a certain work. The work of imagination consists in the transfusion of the soul itself, in the entirety of its definition, into an ideal state of things, which does, or does not, satisfy every requirement, every instinct or predisposition of our complex nature.

Again I say that this ideal state of things must by all means be rightly described. This is the indispensable thing to be done in an Ethic, or system of Moral Philosophy, ere any question of applied Morality can be decided. The search and the description have not always been successful and satisfactory, even for those who have perceived the insufficiency of the existing Utilitarian theories and the naïve distrust in the same. So difficult have been the search and the description that many philosophers have fancied that they have solved the problem by cutting the Gordian knot, — as the sentimental philosopher does by his hypothesis of a moral sense detecting, as other senses do, a particular quality, and that immediately and unmistakably; or, which practically amounts to the same thing, as the Intuitionalist does, who alleges an unfailing intuition, which, like an oracle, says one word or another, when an action is presented, and that these *dicta* can be classified, and thus a strict science be presented. But when the case occurs, as it constantly does, that both these methods fail, then, because the suspended judgment is, more or less confidently, determined, at length, by an investigation of consequences, the scale descends, and the Utilitarian seems to triumph. Turning from all these solutions other philosophers have endeavored to describe the ideal standard, to define what they call “the good.” Their success has not been so satisfactory but that the old forms of pure Intuitionism and a highly refined Utilitarianism still linger. The difficulty has been that the formulas

of words have not brought adequate and clear conceptions. In my judgment their failure has been because they have neglected to notice sufficiently the function of imagination. Their descriptive solutions have appealed to the cold intellect, and not to man as also an imaginative being. Hence they leave us still in the dark, as when we are told that "the good" is "perfection," "universal order," *et al.* These formulas all need explication. Thus, when it is said that "perfection" is the essence of "the good," at once we ask, "What is this perfection?" As all concrete existence is complex, and with manifold relations, perfection cannot be defined by making any catalogue of excellencies, without showing the essential order and interdependence of the synthesis. Nor, when we use the phrase, "universal order," are we much the wiser, though this is, by a step, more definite than "perfection," and suggests an æsthetic satisfaction, such as we experience when viewing the working of a fine machine, or in contemplation of a military evolution, or of the windings and unwindings of the dance, where the thread of harmony and meaning is never lost. We figure countless intelligences, moving among each other in order and harmony, never clashing in deed, or word, or desire. But the conditions for this order, on which its possibility depends, are yet to be discovered, and this the formula does not suggest.

If now we utter our own descriptive word, as before, and define "the good" as a commonwealth of loving souls, unified by that love, and with environ-

ment correspondent, allowing of no want, and furnishing no contradiction, we still need to explicate further such a formula, and to supply definite conceptions.

The underlying truth which alone can give adequate meaning to such a formula is a philosophic one, whose evidence is its ability alone to give meaning to all existence; which may be argued for *a priori*, and which science, in its large definition, supports, viz. : that human reason is a reflection of the Divine reason; that human imagination is a reflection of the Divine imagination, *i. e.*, creative with limited material; that the human body itself is an image of the Divine body, *i. e.*, the physical universe; that the microcosm reflects the macrocosm; that this synthesis, which constitutes the distinctively human, can only be explained by thinking and seeing that the Divine Personal First Principle has projected into independence an image of Himself, and proceeds to draw it towards Himself, that by its free coming it might display His highest attribute, thus to exhibit His own love and enhance His own blessedness; that in order that this objectified existence might be full and rich, in an endless progression, and approach towards His own perfection, its idea is that of an organism of organisms, comprising the totality of all spiritual-physical existence beyond Himself; whose ideal completeness and well-being consists in and is derived from the ideal completeness and perfect well-being of each subordinate organism; so that the members receive their integrity and full development of their potentialities

from the whole; and so that the whole receives its amplification from the perfection of the members, and all its perennial well-being and increasing fulness from its connection with the Divine source and the perpetual flow of life and power and light and beauty and love from the infinite resources. The coalescence and harmony of these members with each other, and with the Divine source on which they depend, is called *love*. This is something which man, as such, is capable of feeling, of imagining, of knowing. Thus we have for the human soul, in the entirety of its faculties and capacities, an ethical commonwealth, in which there is, on the part of each member, a conscious, willing, glad, and complete identification of himself with the whole. The members of it may be multiplied indefinitely, without disturbing the integrity and perfection of the whole, rather amplifying and enriching it, and through its richness enriching each other. As the tree puts forth its multitudinous leaves, which shine and stir, so rich and strong and bountiful is the supply of nourishment through the trunk from the earth; yet as the leaves drink the air, and return nourishment and increase of life and beauty to the tree, which becomes completer and more beautiful as their number multiplies, and their luxuriance glows with stronger life;—so in this ideal commonwealth the propagation of the human race enriches and beautifies the organism which engenders it. We can see no limit to the capabilities of existence, no lack of food, but a bountiful supply for all mental and emotional cravings, if not the

starting into being of desires and gratifications entirely new.

Love, then, is the secret of the ideal universe, love the essential element in the description of the moral ideal. Love is the law and the fulfilment of the law.

But,—something other may be mistaken for love, *now*, when love is not perfect and does not always see clearly. Its definition is something more than pure beneficence, now in this transitional state, when the ideal is not yet actual. The soul is not loving simply because it imparts happiness to all other souls, and that simply because they are sensitive souls. Rather, it blesses by imparting, as it can, love like itself to all other souls. It is not content with anything short of likeness to itself. It has no contentedness with that which is contrary to itself. Unlovingness it must strive to cure and to banish. It cannot allow it to exist with impunity. Since all loving souls are to constitute members of the one organism, all defects and aberrancies in any one must be corrected. If any constituent part of the living machine disorders, or threatens to derange, the whole, it must be corrected, the mischief it works must be repaired, the tendency to work such mischief must be repressed. Thus love contains the element of severity towards whatever contradicts itself. As the *vis vita* in any organism is a recuperative power that seeks to heal all wounds and cure all disease in every member, and, if they cannot be cured, itself languishes in consequence,—so the moral organism, whose *vis vita*

is *love*, has recuperative power, and ever seeks to attract the discordant soul, and to assimilate it to itself. It evidently has the physical forces of the universe at its service, as is shown by the fact that unlovingness sooner or later brings suffering. Love, as it is related to unlovingness, which is a disease needing cure, takes a new name, and that is "Justice." Were all loving there could be no such word or thought as *justice*; or if love were not something more than pure beneficence. Justice, for the perfectly loving, would be needless and meaningless, were it not that justice to the unloving necessitates a discrimination. If human conduct, then, is compared with the ideal standard, and the existing aggregate of human souls with the ethical organism, whose *vis vitæ* is love, it must be borne in mind that duty consists in something more than imparting pleasure and diminishing pain,—that it, now and then, must inflict pain, and thus endeavor to conquer that which produces pain.

And since the physical forces of the universe are on its side in the endeavor to correct all abnormality, the problem of morality is, how wisely to divert these forces. Infinite wisdom only is adequate to do it, and imperfect wisdom must venture cautiously. Thus men often find themselves charged with a power and weapons which they are not wise enough adequately to wield, the power of imparting suffering to unlovingness. Their rule, it is manifest, must be to impart enjoyment, and to supply the conditions for it; the exception to impart pain, whether physical or purely mental. The design in imparting

pain is to cure moral disorder or resupply deficient love. Thus the objective standard is not, so much pleasure, but, so pure and so strong love, leaving the question of how much enjoyment that love will bring unheeded, as something not under human control. As long as there is contradiction the loving soul must be willing to wait for reward to itself, or to desire its postponement for others, must be willing to give up delight till it can safely be. In other words, in such a world as this, and with such a race of beings as the human, love must take the form of *sacrifice* for itself, and of *justice* to others.

That every question of duty which will arise can be solved is not to be expected. The utmost that can be hoped for man at present is that he shall share the loving spirit, and desire that others may have it, and order his life so that they may have it. Thus, whatever means are not confessedly and manifestly hostile to his intent are permissible for him. There are a multiplicity of actions, and a number of life-plans, in themselves indifferent, attractive, or repellent, which he can make moral by adopting any one of them as *his* means of nurturing the loving spirit in himself and in others. Many actions and life-plans are unquestionably forbidden, because unloving. Many others, confessedly and under ordinary circumstances, obligatory. Rules are very useful, and love must take the form of righteousness as long as there is opposition or shortcoming. In constructing a science of human duty, however, we can only move correctly and successfully by having

the right end in view. The whole elaboration will be untrustworthy if regulated by a false end,—any such end, for example, as the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or any possible aggregate of earthly delight. The full rewards of the loving soul, rather its full development and symmetrization, are never reached in this world. The environment is such as is hostile to the perfect beauty; yet the very sublimity which it elicits makes the soul strong—gives the life which will blossom into the perfect beauty. And thus we are brought face to face with the thesis that there is no morality unless there be immortality. Morality, otherwise, is mere expediency, and there is no need of the word. And since what is expedient for one man during his short career may not be expedient for another, and since there is no surety that it will be expedient for any far-off generation, there can be no such thing as obligation, and that word, too, should be discarded. To endeavor to construct a science of moral conduct without taking thought of immortality, is to leave it uncertain, misleading, and untrue. It is to build an house upon the sand. It is labor wasted. Let me then consider more profoundly this question of Immortality.

CHAPTER IX

IMMORTALITY

THE neglect to take into account the fact of continued conscious human existence after death as furnishing a set of relations affecting human conduct before death, is the fatal flaw of Utilitarianism as a reasoned system. If this world's experiences and possibilities only are to be considered, morality is a mere question of expediency, which each individual must determine for himself. There is no higher authority than the individual will, no truer idea than the idiosyncratic subjective one, therefore no right but might—successful will. Such an objective end as the greatest happiness of the greatest number, subjectively adopted and interpreted, turns out to be of no practical use. In the uncertainty of future events, and the ignorance of any end to which all things are tending, no one can show that he has pushed his forecastings farther than others have done, or that he sees more clearly any distant finality, or indeed any intermediate upshot. The doubtfulness doubles itself with each conjecture forward. Any limitation of the present individual will is but a sacrifice in favor of some

other wills, for the immediate future, or for some period of the future arbitrarily fixed. No one can fault the decision of another who declares that the happiness of the existing generation is of as much absolute worth as the happiness of any other, whose existence is still problematical or undetermined. That the increased happiness of any existing generation secures a further increase of the happiness of the generation to follow is assumed as an *a priori* requirement of the theory of Evolution; but a large part of experience is against it, which shows development to produce acuter misery as well as more exquisite pleasure; and all the facts of deterioration, all actual and possible deteriorating influences, are quietly ignored in the *a priori* assumption. Then, too, the doctrine will only hold together as it hangs upon the denial of human freedom, by affirming the will to be always the exponent of the synthesis of existing instincts, ignoring its power to make of these endless new combinations, and thus to supply new motives to itself. This theory of man's virtual passivity before the march of physical change it is needful to assume in order to explain or excuse the familiar fact that most, if not all, existing wills, under the Utilitarian rule, conclude that that part of the possible enjoyment of the existing generation most important to secure is their own; and that it is a procedure with too doubtful result for any one to give up his prospect of enjoyment for the problematical benefit of others, least of all for some distant generation, the very roots of which in another century may be extirpated; therefore, that

to make sacrifice would be deducting from the sum of pleasure and acting adversely to the maxim.

When prolonged existence after death is taken into the consideration, then Utilitarianism (if the name can be still retained) becomes another thing. It is, then, impossible, in regulating conduct, to ignore the probabilities of happiness or unhappiness in that unimaginable realm. These may be supposed to follow of themselves in the constituted, or natural, order, and the inquiry be, What kind of character that can be formed here on earth is most likely to have within it the conditions for happiness in any future condition and possible environment? Or, if one perceives that the natural order itself has no meaning except as the expression of the idea of an intelligent will, then the happiness of a future existence, or its opposite, may be supposed to be arbitrarily bestowed; or else by One only powerful and wise, and thus to have a kind of æsthetic propriety; or the enjoyment may be thought to be bestowed or withheld by One holy and loving, and the requirement for such bestowal to be the possession of love like his own. Thus there must necessarily arise, for a being who is to be or knows himself to be immortal, the strongest of all possible or conceivable inducements to secure his well-being or happiness in an existence that will forever endure.

The presence of such a motive-spring, whether considered abstractly, or as an element in a synthetic one,—viz. : to regard his own possible or probable interest and enjoyment in a future state of existence, and to allow this to determine his conduct while on

the earth,—according to Kant, does, so far, taint the purity of his obedience, which ought to come from simple reverence for the moral law, and be purely disinterested, and only rational. This speculative effort to secure a morality so rigidly stoical, so extraordinarily pure, though well meant and very taking at first thought, nevertheless will not bear examination that will confirm it. Fichte was captivated by it, and his perception that the rule of life is not happiness, but worthiness for happiness, burst upon him as did the view of the Pacific upon the gazer from the “Peak of Darien.” It is revived, too, by some in our own day. It had its analogue in the writings of Fenelon and Madame Guyon; and something similar has now and then been uttered by Protestant religionists, *e. g.*, in the recommendation or requirement of a motive-spring of higher disinterestedness than the ordinary one, which seeks for the subject his own eternal well-being and happiness, and will on no account consent to ignore it, or to sacrifice it, and is not “willing to be damned for the glory of God.”¹

This view, thus variously modified, will be met and its fallacy shown by an examination of it in the Kantian form. What, then, according to this Ethic, is secured by that “reverence for the moral law”? (1) Any objective end solely; or (2) the subjective one that thereby is secured the highest, worthiest rational state of the spiritual subject himself; or (3) this very end taken as objective, *viz.*: that there is an objective end of which this is the main

¹ See Appendix A.

constituent. To suppose, then, that such a being can consent to disregard the first and the last of these possible ends or results, and think of himself as left out of the account, — left in ignorance and suffering, — or the possibility of the same, is to suppose him reconciled to an eternal contradiction. The very law which he reverences requires that he be emancipated from suffering and ignorance. To suppose anything else possible as the doom of the Divine will is to suppose the Ruler of the universe and the Author of the law unloving, and therefore unworthy of reverence; as will be, too, any law that He may issue. The law, then, becomes pure arbitrariness, loses its character of moral fitness, and therefore its rationality; loses all æsthetic fitness, and there is no longer any intellectual satisfaction in contemplating it. It would be such a contradiction as to leave the universe an unconsoling and hopeless riddle still. There is no rest for the inquiring, yearning, aspiring spirit of man, except in the conviction that ignorance and physical limitation, and therefore all suffering, will disappear before a perfect love; that intellectual and physical perfection follow in the train of moral perfection by the most absolute dialectic, by the strictest of all necessity, as the supreme instance of cause and effect.

That our minds, thinking by means of brains, and in space and time, can trace the objective consequences of right or wrong action into a future mode of being is not asserted. The material which imagination would attempt to lay hold of is too

shadowy and tenuous, and cannot be grasped. But we can know and imagine the existence and persistence of the moral quality,—of the loving disposition that we are conscious of possessing and striving to intensify now. We can find good and plausible reasons for thinking that it is best for ourselves that we should not be able to trace the objective results of our subjective dispositions beyond the article of death. What we can and do well understand is, the results of right action upon character in this world,—that it intensifies the loving spirit, that it enlarges the sphere and opportunities of love, gives it a more piercing, discriminating, and wider vision of mundane results, and is accompanied, moreover, by a profound feeling, capable of remaining, even beneath a surface of agitation and sharp suffering, a feeling of peace and blessedness.

That the Omnipotence of the universe will remove the contradiction now existing between the elements of our being, in which physical pain and mental longing and impatience continue even with the loving spirit, is a matter of faith and trust; yet which, though incapable of demonstration, may be said to have high speculative probability, inasmuch as otherwise there is an eternal contradiction and a hopeless irrationality. As long as the human soul fluctuates between rival attractions, as long as it is not strong enough to be secure and safe in its possession of the loving spirit, in its adherence to the requirements of the law, just so long must its vision of future well-being, and of harmonized being, be dimmer than it might be, and the prospect of it

uncertain. It is still doubtful, as far as its own experience is concerned, and the experience of men in general, whether the loving spirit can attain such strength and security against assault that its love will be pure, intense, and permanent; whether the needed ethical perfection can be reached and the contradiction resolved; and therefore whether such intellectual and physical perfection as should be resultant can be attained. Were this made certain, then there would be an inextinguishable light in the darkness, and faith would become knowledge. Let us not forget the claim and the evidence that for one of our own race, though for no other indeed, persistent moral rectitude *did* become sufficient moral strength, and that when this last had reached its height, the contradiction *did* disappear, and thus that its possibility for ourselves may still be held before us with all its consolation and encouragement.

On these grounds it seems clear to my apprehension that the truth of immortality is needed to make a scheme that might still in a modified sense be called Utilitarian, of any worth, or use. Ethic, then, must become also a religion to be a perfect science, and its whole religious character and relations must be investigated ere a sufficient and trustworthy rule of duty, or guide to make a life-plan, can be had. But, lifted into this plane, the scheme, by whatever name called, then, has the highest rationality. The remaining questions in controversy between it and Intuitionism can now be hopefully examined and solved.

The question now is, What guide is there towards

the attainment of the loving spirit, which, however practising sacrifice here and now, must needs acquire perfection and blessedness in the end; and what means, or life-plans, are indicated? The common rules of morality are not always sufficient. No infallible, oracular opinion can be pronounced on *every* specific action. The claim of the Intuitionalist cannot be held valid unless his method will suffice in every case. The Utilitarian is right in saying that the consequences must be searched out ere the decision can be made. But he is wrong when he asserts that the consequences of pleasure are those to be sought for to be determinative. Rather, the Intuitionalist is right, again, in insisting upon the essentiality of subjective rightness. The loving character is the true consequence to be sought; and here is the form of the intuition that is entirely trustworthy, and admits of no exception. The spirit of love is our origin, and the attainment of perfect love our destiny. This is the only *useful* thing after all, and its use has no termination. We can indeed be the agents in imparting much pleasure to others. We can bless their lives, and thus sweeten and enliven our own; but Omnipotence only is master here, and our intent may miss its aim. We must, at times, be the agents also in imparting pain, in order that the reconciliation to pain and the need of pain may be removed. The rules and cautions for the attainment and nurture of the loving spirit must needs fluctuate with changing situations. External aids may be furnished in Institutions, the Family, the State, the Church, in

Divine condescensions and revelations. There is abundant ground for holding that such external aids have been furnished from the start, and upon a wise and far-reaching plan; that the education of the human race has not been at haphazard, but that it has been nurtured, been blessed, and chastised by an All-loving Father, and after methods not unlike those of an earthly father for his children. But while this may be manifestly apparent as to certain portions of the human race, it is not easy to discover the method of the divine dealing with other portions that seem to have been stationary, or to have retrograded. Thus is seen to be started one of the most profound and difficult of all speculative problems,—that of the mystery of Providence. How far a solution of this is possible is an inquiry elsewhere to be made.

The logical form of the above argument for Immortality is this. Reason demands satisfaction. So does the æsthetic sense, which is only reason and feeling dealing with the symbols of the pure idea. There is no higher, and no other, ground for holding anything as true than this satisfaction.

The distinguishing characteristic of the human being is his capacity for enjoyment other than merely physical or animal, and which has spiritual relations and implications. Hereby it is shown that he is denizen of another realm than the merely physical. Possessed of imagination, that wondrous combining power to construct ideal aims, he comes therefrom to *aspire*. These aims grow more and

more supernal, and he cannot be content, or consent to be stationary. This instinct of aspiration demands food, or gratification, and ever new food. Whenever, and as long as, this is denied spiritual pain is inevitable. When it is granted, the temporary satisfaction supervenes, yet passes, and the pain, which had been reduced to a negation, again asserts itself. New objects of aspiration are demanded; the joy that had been felt again fluctuates and subsides into discontent. Through this dialectic process man advances. To be thus endlessly progressive is the utmost reach of human aspiration. To demand more would be to identify one's self with God himself; to imagine a *plenum*, in which all activity would have ceased. The very desire for endless attainment supposes a perennial supply possible from a source which is not limited. Therefore aspiration itself, in its highest reaches, must still acknowledge its dependence for its supplies upon the inexhaustible Fountain. To refuse this is to make of one's self an independent god, supreme in one's own realm, which, however, though subjectively infinite, is objectively limited. In this case existence would become a perpetual shrinking instead of a perpetual expansion. The harmonies would have disappeared before the disintegration. Thus in the imagination of any future form of being which will satisfy the reason and the æsthetic sense, there must be room for this dependence upon the supreme Omnipotence, which becomes its unifying centre; and hence aspiration depends upon and includes adoration or worship, its highest form; and

thus is retained the ethical quality. Therefore love itself, to make the most of itself, requires this supreme object. All this, which is found more or less incoherently in the consciousness of every human subject, is so much surplusage and waste, unless the aim of aspiration be objectively possible. Otherwise what he is and what he does are of no moment and not worth thinking about. They have no consequences of any value. Let him, then, as it chances, be or become a joyous mote in the sunbeam, or a worm to be trodden upon. Right and wrong are needless words, and are only forms of more or less *luck* in the march of chance.

While men endeavor to find or make rules for their conduct, there is implied in every such endeavor the conviction more or less clear that the distinction of right and wrong is an absolute one, and that its legitimacy depends upon an ultimate condition of things, when shall be realized that to which this distinction points. In other words, the concept of immortality is needed to make the distinction valid or true. This is the form of the moral argument.

To enter elaborately into the metaphysical and scientific arguments for immortality would be to transcend too far the bounds of the topic of this treatise; yet some reflections additional upon the border-land between these and those may not be amiss in this connection.

If there is anything which makes the human soul shiver and find itself on the brink of despair, it is the doubt of its prolonged and conscious existence after

that physical change which we call *death*. Probably the explanation of most cases of suicide, when the earthly experience has become unbearable, is the hope or the conviction that what may follow cannot be worse, and may be better,—at least that the step will terminate the agony in its present form. It were unsafe to dogmatize here and say that the suicide will leap into a greater agony, or that he will find entire relief from the present one. The suicide may seem to conclude that he is extinguishing himself absolutely, coming to the same end as does any other animal. But it is evident that he does what we have no ground for thinking that any other animal than man does, viz.: imagines himself as thus extinguished. This can only take the form of an imagination of the disintegration of his physical being merely. He has not, after all, imagined the cessation of being of his spiritual self. In his imaginative effort he has set the other aloof from this which still remains as his spiritual self. He has thrown himself *ab extra* in contemplating this severance beforehand, and has projected his consciousness into an abstract and timeless realm, or where the distinctions or measures of time are something other. Thus the fact that he cannot imagine his extinction as a self-consciousness may be taken as supplementary evidence that such extinction is impossible. This, then, may enter into and be an element of the complex and manifold argument for immortality.

Modern times have shown us the strange spectacle of men dying, to all appearance, resignedly and contentedly, yet believing or asseverating that they

were about to sink into absolute extinction. This supposes them to have reached the conclusion that they were physical organisms only. But the argument for this can never be made so conclusive as to admit of no doubt, for otherwise it would be easy to convince men of its validity. We cannot suppose the consciousness, in such a case, to rest secure and unmolested in the conviction that it was about to pass into absolute extinction. These cases are few and sporadic; and too meagre a report of the mental state of such has come to us to make easy an analysis of the same, hence we may still doubt the asseveration of entire subjective contentment at the thought of such extinguishment. We cannot imagine ourselves thus contented, and therefore we cannot imagine another's contentment. The mental state or range, when near the article of death, is very limited, and likely to be monopolized by one set of thoughts and not to have room for others that have appeared in its past history. Perhaps the self-satisfaction felt or uttered at such a moment has been derived from the knowledge or belief that through the man's effort the sum of human suffering has been diminished, and the likelihood increased that a time in the future is probable or possible when it will be still further diminished. This, for one living upon such a theory, is the utmost that can be hoped for, or striven for. The man has gone out of himself to hope for it, and exercised his imagination in the portrayal of a more satisfying state of things. Thus his present and all the past are only satisfying to contemplate as they

have tended to produce this condition in the future. The preceding generations have all, consciously or unconsciously, sacrificed themselves for some future one. There is something admirable about this state of mind, which seems a very high reach of the sacrificial spirit. It is so admirable that it deserves to have permanence; and we are mentally dissatisfied with the thought that it is only an evanescent gleam after all, momentarily brightening our dark destiny. The beauty of the ultimate generations will have been purchased by the sublimity of those going before. We, now, amid our sacrifices, have our comfort in the imagination of the ultimate beauty. And the generations to come will have theirs in the contemplation of the past sublimity. Thus imagination, in its work, must bind together the future and the past, and there becomes but one object to contemplate. We cannot disconnect them and make a real abstraction. It is an uneasy satisfaction, to say the least, even for the æsthetic sense. The present only has meaning as it is related to the past and the future; which shows that man belongs to both. In this imaginative act he has asseverated his unity with each, and thus is implied his immortality. This alone constitutes the objective worth and gives meaning to his present contemplation.

But if his imagination, at this critical hour, transcends this purely æsthetic field, and he regards himself as capable of loving, he must find that for this is required a wider arena and a closer bond. Love requires more than this purely æsthetic result. Love is a concrete relation. It exists only between

persons. We cannot be said to love these, our far-off children. Nor, without immortality postulated, would there be anything in the past for them to love. All tenderness has been in vain. There is nothing left but the mournful survey of the triumph of the brute forces. Thus the æsthetic sense becomes at once disturbed at this melancholy denial of all real connection with the past. All real objects of love beyond the present disappear; and the, so-called, love for future ones is love for only an abstraction, an imagination, a possibility. This is no longer worth the name. Mankind has no destiny of any permanent worth. No wonder that this philosophy slides so easily into a Pessimism, drives men to despair, and gives a warrant to suicide. The universe, for it, is a soulless machine. Or, since the idea of a machine, even, requires a motive-power, the motive-power of the universe is more than blind, it is malignant. If intelligent (and it is really impossible to think of it as other than intelligent), it must laugh at this human spectacle, as men laugh at the antics of the lower animals. What is left for Philosophy is a Dualism, where that which is good and beautiful cannot maintain itself, where the evil is chief and triumphant.

Only the truth that nature is something more than a jumble of meaningless motions and laws, with no result but disintegration, or a possible cyclical movement; that it subserves some design worthy for intelligence, whereby it becomes rational, —can make men resigned, cheerful, zealous, enthusiastic, and make of any importance the alleged

moral distinctions. This design unites the past with the future, and gives some worth and meaning to sacrifice.

We must be allowed to doubt the alleged indifference with which it is said that some men of philosophic temperament have met death. The human soul clings to life as no animal does, which shows its instinct that life has meaning. Only by some resolute act of will can this longing to live be allayed, plunged down into the soul's depths, and a wave of resignation or indifference be allowed to overflow it. It cannot remain thus overflowed. Were consciousness continued, the oscillation must recommence. The instinct to *live* cannot, in man, be destroyed.

Tennyson, in his poem "Vastness," after enumerating the characteristics of the world's existence and of human life,—the bright and cheering ones mingled with the dark and depressing ones,—gives, in the fourteenth stanza, the radical distinction which makes the one ugly and repulsive, the other sublime and encouraging, thus:

"He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died
in the doing it,—flesh without mind.

He that has nailed all flesh to the cross, till self died
out in the love of his kind.

.....
"Spring and summer, autumn and winter, and all these
revolutions of earth,

All new-old revolutions of empire,—change of the tide,
—what is all of it worth?

"What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying
voices of prayer?

All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy,
with all that is fair?

"What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own
corpse-coffins at last,

Swallowed in vastness, lost in silence, drowned in the
depths of a meaningless past?

"What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a mo-
ment's anger of bees in their hive?

.

"Peace, let it be ! for I loved him, and love him forever ;
the dead are not dead but alive."

CHAPTER X

THE ARGUMENT FOR HUMAN FREEDOM — ITS RIGHT DEFINITION

THE fundamental question of Ethic, which will determine whether there is or can be such a science, is the question of *freedom*, so long and persistently argued. The reply can only be reached through an inquiry into the First Principle of the universe, viz. : the ground of its intelligibility. The preference of one result of this inquiry over another is from its adequacy to account for all that is to be accounted for as a coherent whole. Such sufficiency alone will satisfy the reason. But any such inquiry necessarily supposes the validity of the principle of *causality* as the ineradicable, inevitable law of the human mind,—a fact of its structure. All science, all philosophy, all logic, are based upon and move by this principle.

Ethic is no exception to the rule that all roads lead down to this level, where the mind makes its own light. All questions of right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, true or false, find their solution only *here*,—here where it is desried whether *freedom* is or is not the starting-point and explanation of the

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universe, and, if not, what kind of necessity instead; and if freedom, how freedom is made possible for thought. If the First Principle is free it legitimates the consciousness we have that we ourselves are free. The question of surpassing interest for us human ones is, What is the true position we hold in the world in which we find ourselves? The anxiety to obtain a reply to this is the chief stimulus in all human thinking. Is man a mere *thing*, and utterly determined by the powers brought to bear upon him? Is he a mere phenomenon? If so, whence his origin as such? Or is he other and more than this? Is he in any sense self-centred or independent? Did or can the Principle, or the force, which caused him, project beyond itself that which can, in some sense, be independent? If such can be, we have surely, then, the highest reach of the creative effort. If so, too, it must be at some risk. There is involved the possibility of opposition or contradiction to the Principle, if personal, or of diversion and partial control of the impersonal force which projected him. But unless such independent subsistence be possible, our highest idea of created existence is not reached, and man's own thought reaches farther than the existing universe and whatever is assumed to be behind it or within it. But if this be recoiled from as contradicting the principle of causality, then in the First Principle we must find the adequate origin of whatever we find in ourselves. If we are free, the First Principle is free. If we can love, the First Principle is loving; and, if so, only reciprocal love can satisfy Him. And this, to be love, must not be compelled;

—for, otherwise, the Creator will not have transcended Himself. Thus it appears that all denial of human moral freedom is reduced to pantheistic presuppositions and results.

As before said, we again ask, If the First Principle is not free,—if man is not free,—how could this consciousness of freedom have come to exist? The *onus probandi* is entirely with him who alleges that it is the product of the soulless forces. His very effort to show this supposes the validity and the universality of the principle of causality. This has no other testimony than this same consciousness of man that he is a free cause. Freedom must be somewhere, or the conception of it could not exist. Without it moral questions are mere wasted words. Without it æsthetic problems are unsolvable, and the distinctions of the beautiful and its opposite are as baseless as those of right and wrong.

My thesis, then, is, that there is no such thing as necessity, physical or logical, except as a form of freedom itself; that all denial of freedom assumes that which it denies.

The starting-point of all thinking is the thinker, of all philosophizing is the philosopher. He must necessarily posit either himself as a self-conscious activity or something that has originated in himself, some proposition that he himself has constructed, or some thought left as a *residuum* after the utmost abstraction. Hegel starts with the most abstract thought, pure being, but he has presupposed the activity of his mind in making the abstraction, and the validity of the process itself. He uses it to

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show that it is empty, and only has meaning when what has been abstracted is restored. To restore this in the right order and by the true method is the burden of his logic. And the *mind*, regarded as trustworthy, watches over the steps of the backward process. Therefore, for philosophy, mind itself and its implications must first be examined.

Descartes thought that he had made the true start with himself as a thinker, forgetting that he was more than a thinker, that he *felt* as well as thought; and that his feeling was of two kinds, relating him to two realms, each of which contributed elements of his thought. His formula would have been more productive had it been, "I think and enjoy." No conscious entity can be conceived as a thinking entity alone. Though we say, then, that there is nothing simpler, nothing so simple, as the concrete self-consciousness, yet it is still a complex. And everything else is more complex, and hence less comprehensible. The much-belauded material *atom* is wonderfully complex, needing more to explain it than any mode of mind. The most undoubted and most comprehensible of all things is human self-consciousness, for it is that by which we comprehend everything else. Therefore it ought to be, and is, in spite of all evasions, the starting-point of every inquiry.

The materialist is guilty of a still greater oversight, of a far more absurd mistake. He starts with the thought or assumption of *himself*,—but of himself taken to pieces, with one fragment retained and the rest thrown away. He thinks of himself as a

waif or fragment in a universe of matter, of which he knows nothing except that, and as, it exists in his own thought. He thinks of himself as determined by one set of relations only, ignoring the other, of which his consciousness gives as sure testimony as of the first. There is a vast and unbridgeable hiatus between his First Principle and the results. There is but a shadowy copula between.

As man can only think of himself as a synthesis of relations, he can only think of anything else as a synthesis of relations. All thought is synthetic,—elements from two sources united subjectively; and feeling is the core and the envelope of all thought. All external existence within the sphere of knowledge is what it is in relation to an intelligence which, however universal, is also *mine*. The *datum* of consciousness, then,—this perennial something which never changes,—is the concrete self, with no element abstracted or hidden. What, then, is the unifying element in this *self*; what the highest and therefore the truest *datum* of self-consciousness,—truest because of immediate knowledge, highest because most desirable, which if it did not exist could not be an object of desire? Am I right in thinking of myself as a link in the physical chain or the logical chain,—or am I self-determining or free? To hold either of the first two alone would leave unexplained the consciousness of the third,—nay, would make it an impossible consciousness. Any denial of freedom is but an inference, and not an immediate *datum*. It originates in mental propositions, which, when traced to their source, prove to

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require the presupposition of the very freedom which they deny. *I*, by abstraction and synthesis, have constructed this, or any other, as object for my thought. *I* am its author. It is a creation in the realm of thought. If I reach the conception of a power which compels, *I* have created that concept. To assume my freedom (held in proper manner, yet to be defined) is the true, because the only possible, starting-point. Rightly to hold it alone accomplishes a satisfactory knowledge of the physical chain, or of the logical chain. Nothing reached from any other starting-point of reflection can be allowed to contradict this.

The argument of the Determinist is very specious, but it never convinces. "I am not a feather before the wind, but have life in myself" is the infrangible conviction of every human being. Determinism succeeds in showing, indeed, that I am limited as to my power, and that the material out of which I must construct my universe is furnished for me,—that I cannot manufacture new material. But as this material is the sum of all existence, I see that what I am limited and determined by is under uniform laws, of which I can avail myself; and within this range, unless I discover that I have exhausted the possibilities of combination, I have virtual liberty, which my freedom guides. The combinations which I can make out of the material within my range are innumerable; and science shows more and more that they are unlimited, that the resources of the creative spirit are inexhaustible, and have been, from the beginning, and are yet, constantly

furnishing new material. Hence the *a posteriori* inference of what is also a corollary *a priori* of freedom, that no myriads of universes can exhaust the possibilities of spirit. Why, even human imagination can create that which has never yet been, and to suppose any limit to the divine creative imagination, or (if one does not care to admit that phrase), to the possibilities of development into new conditions of the universe, is the most gratuitous of all suppositions. All past history, as all analogy, is against it. Yet to such a conclusion must the logic of the Determinist lead, viz.: that the universe is a fixed sum of material and force, swathed still in an infinite; in which case it must be a cyclical movement, repeating itself at intervals, or it would, long ago, have reached a *plenum*, and been fixed and frozen. That the creative energy is ever free, is infinitely free, is the counter proposition. If not, it must be limited *ab extra*, and we have a Dualism. The principle of causality dies of inanition, and we have a Pessimism, which dies into a Nirvana, or non-existence. Thus the extreme of absurdity is reached.

If, on the other hand, the creative energy is infinitely free, the human spirit is free, in a range that may be forever extending, or which may be narrowed to extinction; but in the extinction of liberty, freedom is not lost,—as appears when it is rightly defined, and its limitations are shown. Rightly to think freedom is so to think it that no specious substitute, called by this name, shall occupy its place in our thought. If freedom is but the expression of

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our nature, focused for activity, then it would seem that the name is not warranted. But if the central and unifying principle of the nature *is* freedom, then there can be nothing lying back of that to contradict it. The only necessity predicable is when freedom and nature show no discord. We can think freedom as existing when such discord exists. But when the discord ceases, it does not cease to be freedom, though it be at the same time necessity. But this necessity is not *ab extra*, but *ab infra*, and the name of perfect freedom. Love, continuing to be love, can never contradict itself, and is under necessity not to contradict itself, yet love can only be thought as free. If not, the word has no meaning, and that in himself which man regards the highest is a delusion. In God, freedom and necessity are the same thing, and if God is self-determining, then the last can only be thought as the perfection of the first. Any other necessity predicated of God can only have a transient and bewildering plausibility from the materialistic standpoint, or that of the Spinozistic Pantheism; that is, only by marring the conception of the concrete self, which is the starting-point for all thought.

We assume the intelligibility of existences in thinking, writing, or talking about them. Therefore, if intelligible, they are not simple but complex. Nothing can be said of any one but by implying that something else can be said about it. It is what it seems to be in our immediate affirmation because it is also something beside. But all possible relations essential to any concrete existence must be

within the compass of the First Principle, to make it intelligible for Him, and, in degrees, for us. Thought, matter, feeling, and the laws of their combination, must have their basis in God. Nothing can escape Him, or He would be limited *ab extra*, and we should have a Dualism. There is a simpler way to account for everything. God must find in Himself all thought, all feeling, and the possibility of all combinations which can be made of matter. When the First Principle is thought as a Unity in Trinity, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thus, and thus only, do we find the possibility and the basis of all being, thought, and energy, and their guiding impetus, love. Neither of these can be thought without thinking the other, as presupposed or implied. The very conception of *will* requires all three; and requires, besides, the abstract divine glory, which enables a limitless possibility of determining it in multitudinous and inexhaustible forms. As *spirit* itself cannot be thought as existing but as in this triplicity, as thus constituted, as self-determined, so the abstract divine glory cannot be thought as *existing* but by virtue of its determinations, and these are by spirit.¹ There is no metaphysical necessity required to think and make these determinations, but only the necessity of love to be true to itself. Thus they are *free*, and since their final cause is reciprocal love, they are recognized as free. Thus the divine freedom proves that reciprocal love *is* the final cause, and the existence of reciprocal love proves the divine love, and hence its freedom.

¹ See Appendix A.

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This is the highest possible form of proof. The beginning rounds through the perfect circle to the end, and the perfected circle is prolific. It alone supplies an infinite for imagination as well as for thought.

But we still have to show carefully the limitations of human freedom, and hence its right definition. All moral systems which profess to give rules for human conduct assume moral freedom, even though their philosophy denies it. They persist in spite of the contradiction. The disposition to deny it has arisen because certain thinkers have carried it too far, and have confounded physical liberty with moral freedom. The former consists in the ability to use for some subjective end the material and the forces which are supplied to us *ab extra*. This material is limited, indeed, and the human force itself, which so diverts force and uses material, is itself borrowed or imparted, and can be thought to diminish, to cease, or be extinguished, without contradiction. But moral freedom is something quite other, is not physical at all, and consists in using this material and these forces, while we have them at command, for some subjective end, which it has itself constructed. And these ends can be classified as egoistic, or variously altruistic. Even though the material and the force be utterly withdrawn, the moral quality still persists, as an indication of the foregone habitude. It can nourish or weaken itself by its own inner power. Though all activity beyond itself be reduced to naught, love can still persist, can nourish itself by the belief in

love as its origin, and long for a sphere of activity, or be resigned to the denial of it, through faith in the Supreme One. Any field of activity is possible only through a Power beyond itself, and, hence, any such field is for it necessitated. But an element of the very end set for it by its loving Source is that it shall have ultimately such a field. The denial of this would sap its faith in the love of the Source and cause itself to die. Faith in that love requires that its moral freedom shall at length be gifted with a perfect liberty. The sole necessity that can remain for it is the necessity that will spring from its own perfection, the necessity of loving the Supreme object, the necessity of adoration or worship.

All this seems to flow through a thought process, which contains no contradictions nor hiatus, and would seem to be so imperious as to set the mind at rest. And at rest it would be, were not man other than a pure thinker, were he not also an imaginative and emotional being. From this side, doubt does enter, and will forever enter, with keenness proportioned to the degrees of the inborn imagination and emotion. But all doubt, when analyzed and its source discovered, proves to come from the admitted fact of physical evil, and the persistent admission to one's self of the existence of moral evil. It is possible to think that a human soul can be persistently unloving, and fling itself out of the harmony. To avoid this troubling conviction, to deny it, or to pare away the evidence for it, is a natural propulsion of the loving soul itself. Of all things it would be gladdest to see any way by which it could think that

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love would be a universal characteristic. The persistence of this dark shadow, caused by the appearance of moral evil and the facts of human cruelty and suffering, often causes the loving soul to doubt, and tempts it to reverse its very conception of the First Principle itself. It would seem that the Loving One had made reciprocal love possible at too fearful a cost. The human loving soul would not so have done.

Yet so it is, and there is no evading it. Yet the alternatives of moral good and evil are before us still; and we, if we choose the former, cannot evade these fearful doubts. One thing we see, however, viz. : that by standing steady before these assaults we become spiritually strong. And *this* is an elevation in the scale of being. The trial is, whether the temptation springing from these doubts shall sway us to be unloving or to pretermit our activity to spread the loving principle.

CHAPTER XI

MORAL EVIL — QUESTION OF THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS

I HAVE noticed that in most treatises of Formal or Material Ethics the problem of moral evil does not receive adequate treatment. Sometimes it seems to be intentionally avoided, either because it presents insurmountable difficulties, or because it is thought to have no place in a positive science; and sometimes, avowedly or otherwise, it is explained away. Without its admission it is quite easy, under any ethical system, to construct a scheme that is specious, or satisfying, and the temptation springs up to rest content with such presentation, and not to notice how it would be affected by the fact of moral evil, were this admitted. In this case, should the avowal be made that the problem is insoluble, and therefore must be left out of the account, still the need would exist to define this problem accurately, and to separate it entirely and clearly from the region within which indubitable knowledge is possible. And if this is done, still the whole positive presentation cannot claim to be an exhaustive philosophy, since leaving the evidences

of moral evil out of the account. So strong is the gasping endeavor in the philosophic mind for a unified and completely self-coherent system, in which nothing is left unaccounted for, that an interpretation of the facts alleged as evidence of moral evil is often given, which brings no contradiction, nor mars the integrity of the system presented. But one only needs in thought persistently to dwell upon the perpetual manifestations of moral evil to be convinced that it does not so readily take its place in such harmonious system, but presents a contradiction still.

The moral ideal itself, however, undergoes no modification in consequence of this contradiction. It still exists, in the thought and for the imagination, in its integrity and beauty. The ultimate condition, which is its realization,—a commonwealth of loving souls, with environment correspondent, with the physical material entirely at its unhindered service, with all knowledge harmonized, yet ever progressive, and ever active in probing for, finding, and enjoying the rich resources of the divine creative activity,—still shows in its rational and æsthetic perfection, and satisfaction for every possible need or impulse.

But even here the question still obtrudes itself, What, if any, is to be the relation of this loving commonwealth to moral evil concentered in rational souls, if such will or can exist? Can we think a clean and utter separation, and that the dark concretion is forever unknown as to its determinations, and even as to its existence, to the holy common-

wealth, and exists only in and for the divine mind ? And if this could be suspected, and hence not utterly unknown to the holy ones, would it not trouble their complacency ? Could even these be entirely blessed if having in their knowledge the fear, if not the fact, and the imaginations ensuing ? The human heart, sooner or later, refuses to acknowledge the truth of any logical system or theological doctrine which alleges them to be resigned, or complacent, or satisfied, or rejoicing over the persistence in being of evil and suffering, or, if not that, of degraded, deteriorating, and diminishing souls. It cries out so violently against this demand upon it that it is thrown back again upon the endeavor to find and adopt, or to manufacture, or authorize, or confirm some scheme of thought for the restoration of these,—and thus it is plunged anew into the old difficulties. Its *hope* that such restoration may be, never dies. But its conviction that it will be is too weak or unauthorized to be trusted ; and so it vibrates from one side to the other, with faith in God's love still, weakening or strengthening by turns, according as one alternative or the other is presented and looks plausible.

We acknowledge that there is no reply to the inquiry how the perfected ones are related to this dark and separated *residuum*, if it be thought to exist. They can only trust God still, and put forth their perpetual prayer, their longing for the brotherhood thus far marred or refused. But we condemn any dogmatic statement which asseverates, as a clear thought, either the certainty of any such

restoration, or its impossibility. We can see, too, that it is best for the morally good ones to have this problem unsolved for a time; and that they should still regard the possibility of persistent evil, in order that they may put forth their utmost efforts to diminish the number of those who seem committed to it, to weaken its propagating power, and thus to strengthen their own loving spirit.

The question then must needs arise, how, the fact of moral evil being admitted, this may, must, or should affect our own moral mundane behavior. It, our activity, would be one thing were there no moral evil, and did life consist in only moral development, as seems to have been the divine intent, or idea, in the creation of man. It would be another thing were there a certainty, or even a persistent belief, that moral evil would disappear. It would be still another thing if there were no such belief, or even hope, in this. It is easy to see that, according as we hold one or the other of these alternatives as the habit of the mind, our life-plans and our moral efforts would be widely different as to their material content, if not as to their ethical form. The motive-spring might remain steadily the same, while motives or intentions would admit of difference and classification.

But if persistence in evil be admitted as abstractly possible, and that there will remain at the consummation souls still antagonistic to the ideal harmony, and isolated, no one has the knowledge and therefore the right to pronounce for any human one that he belongs to this category, and may therefore be

abandoned. Still, the testimony seems so abundant and overwhelming that some pass out of this life having made steady progress in the evil direction, that, since this possibility exists, the motive to arrest such tendency, wherever found if possible, is urged to the utmost strength.

In formulating any moral code, or in giving counsel for immediate moral action, these considerations should not be left out of the account. Thus we see how endlessly complicated any science of Material Ethics must be; and we may doubt whether it is possible it can have any scientific precision,—whether spiritual freedom can at all be scientifically treated. An exhaustive reply to any question concerning moral duty will be somewhat different in each individual case. Hence general rules which cover all possible cases cannot be formulated. It is always possible to find an exception in which such general rule is seen or suspected to be untrustworthy. Yet such general rules are needful and eminently serviceable. They are the endeavor, at any existing stage of man's history, to regulate present conduct rightly in view of the moral ideal; but their details must change with the changing situation. Hence they serve well for ordinary occasions; and most questions of morals can be stated in general form, and help to their replies be given. To separate as far as possible what is comparatively steady and permanent from what is fluctuating is the task and the motive of clear thinkers, or moral philosophers.

But before attempting to offer such aid, all the material that may affect the judgment must be

gathered together. I have said that it has been the fault of many moral treatises that they have not made this ample search and accumulation; and our effort is to gather together all the considerations that may possibly affect the final judgment, or have influence upon the reply needed to any concrete question.

Besides all the material that we have thus far accumulated, there is one other field of inquiry, and hence possible material, that has been neglected in most moral treatises. It is the belief of many that we may and must reckon, among our facts to be dealt with, the existence of evil spirits other than human, that have influence somehow, direct or indirect, upon the human will. If this be utterly rejected, of course it must be left out of the account in constructing our moral science or tentative science. But it should not be rejected without examination. And even if, after such examination, it should remain doubtful, still this doubt it shares with many other beliefs which affect moral conduct, and the belief in it of any one must affect our estimate of his moral decisions and influence any counsel we may give. Let me give, in brief, an examination of this claim.

In the history of the human race numerous facts have occurred which have been explained, and perhaps, at the time of their occurrence, could only have been explained, upon the supposition of some alien and malignant spiritual influence brought to bear upon human passion or action. History is full of these, and we do not propose to adduce any of

them. In later times many of these have been naturally explained, in consequence of new attainments and discoveries in physical science; which success has strengthened the suspicion and given rise to the perhaps too confident assertion that all of them could be, or should be, so explained. Nor is it wise to set any limit to the success of physical, physiological, and psychical science in this particular. In our own day an association has been formed to gather together whatever well authenticated facts bearing upon this question can be had, and to examine them scientifically. We may hope much from such an endeavor, and it is noticeable that already the dogmatic assertion that all these occurrences can be brought into the domain of science is weakening; and that the opinion of the possibility of alien spiritual influence is strengthening. If the attempt to include these among scientific facts be successful, it will not be difficult to trace the origin and the history of the belief in evil spirits in the human story. But as yet, so far as this is a scientific question, it must be left in doubt. This is the true scientific attitude, and the attitude is not scientific which prejudges the question and asserts on *a priori* grounds, and from an induction which may prove to be incomplete, that one result only is possible, and that the assertion of any spiritual interference with the natural order is surplusage.

There is no such *a priori* assumption sufficiently well grounded. Free spiritual beings, having before them the possibility of moral distinctions, and who do for subjective ends interfere with the natural

order, *have* appeared on this earthly arena. We men are such. From the same source from which such beings have come, other spiritual beings than the strictly human may also have come. If there be ground for holding the divine omnipotence, and infinity of resources, there is no warrant for limiting these attributes in this particular. To be sure, we can conceive no higher created self-conscious being than the human,—a being self-determining, and, as to the moral form, self-creating. We can only distinguish him from other spiritual beings, possible to be thought and imagined, by hypothecating for them a different environment, a different set of organs, and hence of possible relations. But nothing within the compass of our thought and imagination can elevate them above the human ones. It is, for thought, indifferent whether much or little be *given*, whether physical liberty be large or narrow. The inner control of the same, the self-determining principle, is an even quantity in every case, admitting of no more nor less. However gifted and privileged in this regard, no beings higher than the human in spiritual character can possibly be thought. But if the environment be different, either in itself, or by means of other organs of relation than ours, then the concrete form in and by which any moral distinctions could show themselves would be different. Temptation to be false to the moral idea would be in distinct shape.

We do not forget that yearly science shows more and more clearly the sameness and universality of physical law; that the chemical constitution of the

most distant stellar bodies is identical with that of our own earth; that light and gravitation are all-pervasive; that the laws of motion are uniform; and hence the probability is strengthened that, if in any of these orbs there are beings capable of moral life, they must be organized as we are. But our eyes are not opened yet to all the wonders of the physical universe, and we may be surprised, in the future, at the inlettings of light. But be there much or little yet to be attained, however small our present knowledge, still all the while we shall know ourselves as spiritual beings, existing in a region independent of physical laws, and timeless, and it is in this that the moral distinctions appear. We think of ourselves as dying. With that passage all distinctions of space and time disappear. We can think away all limitations of the one or the other, through which alone their abstract existence is known, yet think ourselves still in the moral character we bear. What organs enabling escape beyond our subjective selves, and communion with other spiritual beings will then be possible we know not, and our imaginations here are untrustworthy, because baseless. Yet our very moral character, which, since loving, is an impulse beyond ourselves, causes us to believe in and to find needful such possibility of transcending ourselves, though the method of it may defy imagination. So powerful and wonderful is the human will, when loving, that it will not consent to any permanent degradation here. It would make anew its own world, and create a commonwealth of shadows, and thus nurture and occupy its own loving spirit. But,

holding to the continuance of our self-consciousness beyond the passage of death, what will be our environment, and what our organs, are unimaginable, though something be abstractly thinkable. Thus it appears that here is a form of self-conscious existence, other than and beneath, our present mode by sight, sound, and touch. There are then no *a priori* grounds for saying that other spiritual beings than ourselves may not exist in this form, and (figuratively speaking) inhabit this realm.

Moreover, the hypothesis of the existence of evil spirits renders less difficult the explanation of human moral corruption. Of the two theories, (1) that moral evil began in its lowest form, out of mistaken prudence, and (2) that it began in its highest and more intense form, of pure spiritual evil, the latter is most successful in explaining its origin, history, and condition in mankind.¹ Thus we have an hypothesis, of great speculative probability, which confirms the naïve admission in the Christian Scriptures of the existence of such evil spirits, and their interference in human affairs. In speculating, then, upon this form of spiritual existence, we may, hypothetically assume the verity of these alleged facts; noting, too, that they have the *imprimatur*, as facts, of the holiest, wisest, and most trustworthy soul that ever spake with human lips; and may see what light these narratives throw, and what aid they give. And if the fact of the interference of evil spirits with human affairs can be shown to have

¹ See this question argued in chapter iii., vol. i., of the author's work, *Christian Doctrine Harmonized*.

trustworthy evidence, or even rendered probable, and if the belief in this does or may affect human consciousness, then in giving rules for human action in concrete cases, this is a factor that cannot be left out of the account. Sufficient and convincing testimony to the existence and influence of spiritual beings other than the human is not likely ever to be had. We may think, indeed, that it is best for us that it should not be had,—that it should be a matter of belief rather than of knowledge. This belief may exist from pure dogmatic grounds, *e. g.*, the admission or statement of the same in the Christian Scriptures; or may be derived from testimony to events eluding all natural explanation,—which evidence can never reach beyond the probable; or it may be derived from the speculative grounds above given. But wherever it exists it affects human conduct, and Moral Science must provide for such concrete situations such rules or counsel as are possible.

Assuming then, for the occasion, that spiritual beings other than human exist, and disregarding any testimony as to any particular activity on their part, let me endeavor, as a matter of pure speculation, to show what results might be predicated, *a priori*, concerning such form of existence. The whole question of evil intelligences is included in the larger one of the existence and mode of being of spiritual existence other than human, in general,—of angelic existence, whether it be holy or evil. If there be more than one kind, or order, of such beings, still—they being by assumption spiritual—there can be no distinction among them as to the

moral characteristic, whatever there may be as to difference in environment, and of organs of communication. It is assumed that they are all free intelligences. That any of them were created evil would degrade them below freedom. As the physical forces, they would only be passive *media* of destruction. If they are thought as free, they must have been created metaphysically good, *i. e.*, innocent, or morally indifferent. To think them as created securely holy is again to degrade them and deny their freedom. They are no longer self-determining beings, and must take their place below the human. They occupy a rank only a step above the beneficent physical forces. Hence the problem of evil spirits assumes their freedom, and it is the misuse of this which is to be accounted for. The holiest archangel, therefore, cannot have been created such, but must have undergone development.¹ The resources, then, of the divine glory, which must have been determined for them, being open for their further determination and use, these they might deal with in the moral or the unmoral form, and thus alternatives existed, and temptation was possible. But, unless the angelic story be a mere anticipation of the human (which on *a priori* grounds is improbable, for if it were so there would be no distinct problem to be thought out), we must suppose a difference in the form of temptation. As they, too, have arisen out of the nature-ground, and are not pure spirits (for such are unthinkable, the Godhead only being pure spirit), no distinction is

¹ See pp. 158-160 in the author's work, *Mens Christi*.

thinkable between any temptation that might befall them and that which exists in the human story,—no distinction that is not merely one of more or less, but is different in kind,—unless it be the distinction between pure evil and evil mixed and disguised, as was its form for the human ones. Theirs, then, must have been the temptation to spiritual independence, known and avowed as such, and not disguised as is the case in human experience. In man evil appears, first, in its impure form, and gradually works its way to spiritual purity. In angels it must appear, first, in its pure form, and *descend* in quality, if any activity ensues; while in the human story it *ascends* in the spiritually evil scale.

A distinction in angelic existence is then possible to be made, in thought and for imagination, between the right use and the misuse of freedom. In the one case, evil in its pure, and hence most intense, form being rejected, we have at once a secure elevation in the grade of being and the impossibility of lapse; and these may then become God's ministers for the highest uses. Holiness is assured and permanent; and domination over the resources of the divine glory needs no restraint. There is no need of the slow process through which mankind must be led to attain it. In the one case the moral determination appears as timeless and without a history. In the other case it appears as a time process, both lingering and painful. What now results, evil being taken in its pure form, and spiritual independence being asserted by others of such free intelligences; what changes in the relation

to the outlying universe can now occur? This is the form of the question to which we have been led.

As man, in his story, has been led slowly out of the mesh of the sensual into the spiritual, either in a constantly ascending, or steadily descending, process, terminating either in secure holiness, or in pure spiritual evil (for that the latter is possible thought cannot deny, though feeling may cast doubt), we find ourselves compelled to think that in the case of the angels who have chosen the evil alternative, the process must have been exactly reversed. It begins where the other ends. There is a descent and tendency and constant progress towards the lower forms of evil, and hence into grosser forms of existence. An utter exclusion from all environment is not imaginable, however it may be thinkable; and we must either hold this to be the final upshot of the spiritual perversion, and possibly to be the ultimate condition of such, which would appear to be a perpetual dwarfing, and an interminable progress towards utter extinction; or we must hold that meanwhile, an environment still existing, there is a steady process of degradation into the lower forms of evil, even into almost complete identification with the purely physical forces and forms of life, and those which exist for destructive ends, and which constitute the dialectic of Providence. Angels may thus become demons, and find nearer fellowship with brutes and imbruted men than with men moving in the spiritualizing process, even when this is towards pure evil. The spiritually evil man may be defended against them, and disdain or not need

their aid; while the sensually imbruted man may become their victim. Or, when the attempt to make themselves at home in the human body has been rebuked, or has been unsuccessful, they may find themselves at home in the bodies of the brutes.¹

It would appear, then, that if, in deciding upon our moral action, and in view of all possible beliefs that may influence human conduct, any admit as a factor the possibility of this alien influence upon themselves, affecting their temptations and their motives, they may be persuaded to regard such evil influence as only possible to be exerted upon them through their physical structure; and that they are secure from such in proportion as they are spiritual. Here, too, is an inducement to keep pure these our bodies, by refusing every form of carnal transgression or excess in sensual indulgence. Any degradation here and acquired brutishness would seem to open the door to demoniac influence,

¹ Note that the questions whether the descent of demons into the bodies of swine might not have been prevented; and on what grounds it was permitted by Jesus Christ — whether he had the power to prevent it, and whether the will to permit it can anyhow be justified; that these are entirely distinct questions from that I have argued in the text above. They are purely exegetical and theological ones, entirely beyond the scope and intent of this treatise and must be argued on their own peculiar grounds.

Note, also, that the question whether there is any recovery for such evil spirits, any reversal of the process of degradation, or whether there is or is not a persistent Dualism for thought, may or must also be argued from dogmatic postulates, or purely theological ones. Likewise to discuss this is beyond the scope of this treatise, which considers the whole question only as it is related to possible human moral conduct.

if such be possible. If temptation from this source is possible, resistance is possible. Cases where the human being is passive, and has become possessed, do not seem to occur any longer. We have sought to show that there is no irrationality in their occurrence; and it is a question of history merely that and when they occurred, and ceased. And such evil influence, in lesser degree, need only be feared by those who have gone to excess in carnal indulgence. It need not be feared by those whose course is upward, and who hold a steady front before the encroachments of such forms of sin. There is no warrant whatever to hold that responsibility is lost or diminished by these possibilities. And, whether authorized or not, if any one believes himself to be thus influenced, his case, too, must be thought of, and advice provided to aid him in moral decisions.

CHAPTER XII

THE ÆSTHETIC IDEAL

THE æsthetic ideal and the moral ideal are identical. Rather, in the *bonum consummatum*, the moral ideal, having been realized, ceases to be moral, and is merged in the æsthetic. Moral distinctions have disappeared. Love, the universal solvent, has annulled any distinction between acts, and among characters, that could be called *moral*. Pure spontaneity, limitless dominion over the existing material, admits of no differences, except the one of less or more, in the onward progress, in the speed of attainment, in the various results by which idiosyncrasies may manifest themselves, and each show his own unique distinction. Thus is furnished perpetual food for the æsthetic feeling, whether contemplative or active, the delight in perfection, the joy of unrestrained and successful activity in a field which is boundless.

The emotion of the Beautiful, as it is experienced now while we are in transit, has its explanation only in freedom,—in freedom symbolized,—in the symbols by which the outer world displays the law of spirit itself, in unrestraint, and endless variety, and

inexhaustible wealth of resources. Were not such limitless freedom possible for thought and imagination, and hence possible for existence and realization, the emotion of the Beautiful could not exist. Any mere physiological tentative explanation could not account for it.

And did not moral perfection require as one of its elements moral strength as well as moral rectitude, were there not the consciousness of difficulty, of exertion, of conflict, and the hope of victory, the emotion of the Sublime could not exist. And in the perfect state, the æsthetic ideal realized, there is still the possibility and the desire of this. If there are heights to be surmounted in knowledge or anything which tasks the spiritual strength,—since this will require perfection and vigor in the entire synthetic structure,—in the effort which does not at once leap to success but is conscious of exertion to overcome difficulty, we have the conditions for the emotion of the Sublime still. We should be loath to miss that wondrous emotion wherein the soul is rapt into a higher mode of being, seeks to amplify itself, and undergoes a dilation, which, when it subsides, leaves the soul larger than before. Yet, since for such perfected souls success in every effort is certain, when the triumph is gained the Sublime again subsides into the Beautiful. The tasked spirit rests in its attainment, which then is resolved into and takes its place in the universal harmony. The divine potence and science are now shared, and there are no restraints, or only such as can be overcome. As the resources of the divine thought

and energy are infinite, and may be forever outpoured in new forms for contemplation and activity, in the endless progress, which is then a succession of upward leaps and rests, towards the knowledge and the sharing of the same, is the only Dialectic. The emotion springing from the contemplation of the pure spiritual Godhead, and the abstract attributes, should be called by some other name than either Sublime or Beautiful.

Thus the principle of Æsthetic itself is freedom, spontaneity, love,—which finds itself and its fulness of being by going out of itself, and by realizing all its potentialities, and creating new syntheses. That, now, in the outer world, is beautiful, and that only is beautiful, which through imaginative activity carries the soul along in a movement unrestrained, and wherein its subjective caprice is satisfied. That only is sublime which tasks the imaginative soul beyond its wont, in the endeavor to fill a larger form of existence, whether it be of magnitude, or force, or of moral strength.¹ All restraint is contradiction, that we seek to triumph over, and reason is not satisfied till the contradiction is removed; while it misses the harmony and mutual interdependence which lays at rest all immediate inquiry, and it can melt itself into aspiration. All error in thought, even, depends for its very existence upon the principle of moral evil, of the misuse of freedom. It could not be, had not this made for itself a subjective and unreal world, a synthesis of thought, which

¹ Find all the above proven by analysis in the author's work, *The Beautiful and the Sublime*.

is something other than the true, eternal, and real one.

If these results are established we see that Æsthetic, so far as it is an independent branch of philosophy or science, supports Ethic, so regarded as independent. But they are only distinct by a convenient abstraction.

When the time arrives that physical science shall have gathered more material for its inductive inferences (and we begin to see that there is as much yet to be attained as has already been accumulated, and that of finer quality), we shall see that it, too, will furnish support for the conclusions of Ethic and Æsthetic. The predispositions of the outer world will be found in harmony with the predispositions of humanity; and the contradictions of the same to image and spring from the contradictions of the latter. This will be a result that will combine all these in a science which will contain them all, harmonized and coherent, which may be called the science of Correspondence. And this final science will be found to have its unity, its beginning, and its end, in *religion*; in the relation which self-conscious life, summing up in itself these physical, ethical, and æsthetic characteristics, will bear to the First Principle. And thus is opened yet another inquiry.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

THE religious consciousness only exists, concretely, in synthesis with the moral and the æsthetic consciousness; and though all three thus combined are but an aspect of mentality in general, yet they may by abstraction be considered independently; but in order that either may be concluded upon exhaustively, it must be replaced, when it has been partially illumined, for complete illumination, in the totality from which it has been drawn.

The æsthetic consciousness respects the realized ideal, in which pure spontaneity exists, and in which is the absence of all contradiction. Thus it includes an emotion arising from the full satisfaction of the reason, which now seems to have no further function. Imagination now takes its place, and creates new structures, new fulfilments of aspiration. Reason can only awaken to activity again should contradiction ensue. This may be thought as impossible in fact, but since metaphysically possible for thought, reason lies *perdu*, and would stir if contradiction became; but, short of that, all mental activity would be imaginative, and hence emotional.

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The hitherto moral consciousness, which has ceased to be properly *moral*, as admitting of no alternatives, is thus included in the æsthetic consciousness; and its ideal in the æsthetic ideal realized, as an element of it,—yet the most essential element, being, as it is, the main constituent, the absolute *sine qua nōn* of the æsthetic ideal. This is the loving commonwealth,—a concord of wills, in and for which no disagreement exists, or can exist. Love is our name for the binding relation between the intelligences who constitute this commonwealth, and this word makes it more intelligible than any other can do. All desire and seek the same things, and all are mutually sympathetic, if not also helpful. In the boundless field before them for activity and progress there are not only the never-ending plunges into the infinite abyss of the Divine thought; but, since each intelligence is a reflection of the Divine intelligence, with therefore a *quasi* infinity, or at least inexhaustibility, each one may find delight in probing the recesses of the consciousness of another, unrebuked, and find his own enriched thereby. Thus the creative imagination rules in this realm likewise; and reason has no further function as an activity. Even now, while we are in transit, the reason judges of all present actions, or states of mind, accomplished or proposed, by referring the same to the requirements of this ideal state. It is generally confident, yet it is sometimes perplexed, in its endeavor to judge of a proposed action by applying this criterion. But, as long as convinced that the motive-spring of such action is the true one,—viz.: to realize this loving

commonwealth,—it knows that it retains the most important factor of its rightness, and trusts that any possible mistakes as to *means* will be overruled and made to subserve the supreme end. It judges, without mistake, the quality of the *form* of this action, even though the knowledge of its *content* have been partial; and has ground for thinking that though possibly sometimes mistaken in the forecast of results, the purity of the *form* secures that the knowledge of the *content* of all moral action shall be progressive. In the trust that the Supreme Power which rules the content of its action will divert its results towards the realization of the moral ideal, the thinking soul shows the *religious* element; which thus is seen to be implicit in its consciousness, and thus to be a part of its definition as a concrete. Here then is a relation, implicit, which can be made explicit, between the mind morally judging, and the Power which alone rules the content of all subordinated activity, and this relation is seen to be one of trust, or *faith*. Religion, then, in its primal and fundamental form, is involved in all right moral choice or activity.

The object of this relation may remain undeveloped for thought, and be simply "the power that makes for righteousness," or it may undergo scrutiny to discover its implications. This is the task of Philosophy, or Theology. The naïve religious relation, however, is expressed as above. It is the conscious relation between the human *will*, *i. e.*, mind and heart, and the Power which rules the world of its experience, the intelligence of which is

thus assumed, and is really assumed in the very denials of it. The very admission of uniformity of law is only another way of expressing trust in the source of such law. Thus, to emasculate the fundamental element of religion is impossible for one who *thinks*. But upon this foundation may be built, "wood, straw, and stubble," or "gold, silver, and precious stones." The religious consciousness, developed or overlaid, will be one thing or another, will be false or true, will be much or little, according as the object of this trust is rightly or fully regarded. Thus in its naïve and original form it is either entirely without ethical quality; or it may have a dim sense that the Sovereign Power is beneficent; or this may be figured as malignant, yet possible to be appeased; or it may be regarded as purely evil. This last conclusion is the one to which the argument of the absolute determinist will logically lead him. If purely evil, it cannot be appeased, or there can be no faith in its apparent appeasement, and thus religion will be needless, and the religious feeling will only spasmodically arouse. The adoption of this philosophy, with logical consistency, in determining thought and action, is the farthest astray that men will ever be able to go; and its complete representative is the true Antichrist. With it evil alone is eternal, religion is needless, for, since evil is disintegrating, it acknowledges no power that can invade its security.

Religion, then, can only be restored, when thus weakened at its foundation, by regarding the requirements of the moral and æsthetic consciousness.

Mere abstract reasoning may, by disregarding these, conduct to the one conclusion that the Supreme Power in the universe is evil, or if regarding these, that it is absolutely good. In the one case religion disappears. In the other case it becomes paramount; and our relation to, and dependence upon, this Power is the chief thing for us to consider, and suffer to become influential.

Forever will the human will, *i. e.*, mind and heart, vibrate between the *faith* on the one hand, and fear, defiance, and scorn on the other. It is impossible to think the Power of the universe to be indifferent. If there is any trust in our mental procedure, it must be regarded as either purely good, or purely evil. To regard nature as a Juggernaut, and to go no further in our thought, is mere mental indolence.

Such thoughts as these have run through the brain of Omar Khayyám, in his *Rubdiyd*, and reach the same conclusion as I have given above, in the following stanza:

“O Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make
And ev’n with Paradise devise the Snake :
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken’d—Man’s Forgiveness give—and take !”

Religion, then, to preserve itself in perpetuity, must adopt the one alternative. It perishes if the other is adopted. Resignation or defiance is the ultimate attitude of the human soul towards a Power thought to be purely evil. But there is enough in human experience to make such a

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conclusion doubtful; and religion has persisted in existence in spite of all doubts and attacks, and has ever shown itself as the most influential of all factors that determine human activity.

My present purpose is to show that religion adds support to the delivery of the moral consciousness. This it does in this way. It springs out of the essential and distinguishing characteristic of the human being. That which distinguishes the animal from plant life is the capacity for and the fact of enjoyment. In it first the delight that pervades nature is drawn to distinct centres and made manifest. That which distinguishes man from the brute animal is the capacity for enjoyment of which spiritual elements are also factors, or his ability to construct and live in an ideal. He knows, feels, thinks, and acts only as a social being. He cannot unfasten the social tie. He cannot propagate himself alone. If he isolate himself from his kind, the very antagonism into which he throws himself is proof of the existence and the strength of the social tie, which he vainly endeavors to sever, but can only seem to weaken. It abides in spite of all his effort. When yielding to the involuntary proclivities of his nature he is social of necessity. He depends for his enjoyment, or its variety, and often for his very existence, upon others, upon the ability they have to serve him. But this power of theirs is limited, and their disposition may be hostile, and he longs for more powerful support and aid than theirs. If there be such, his feeling and his thought stretch out towards it. The Power which rules the environing nature meets

him at every turn. Năively he thinks it at least as high as himself, more powerful surely, therefore more intelligent, therefore personal; and so seeks to form with it a personal tie which shall be favorable to himself either positively or negatively. This relation of the human person to the possible Person who makes and rules all he sees, even the content of his own action, is the essence of religion; and religion is only so far true as this Person is rightly and fully thought, and false only so far as this thought is inadequate. But the personal relation is the perennial and unchanging element.

Religion, then, supports the moral consciousness by carrying this personal relation into the moral ideal. Here the ethical requirement, which alone can satisfy the reason and the æsthetic sense, is that the relation shall be one of love, of mutual interdependence, of immunity from contradiction. The personal tie to One who is omnipotent may therefore become the strongest of all, for from this omnipotence come the supply of resources and the laws of enjoyment, of activity, and advance. Since dependence belongs to the Divine relation alone, and enrichment comes from that source in ample supply,—both being but partial in the relation of subordinate intelligences to each other,—a new and unique emotion must needs arise and abide between any human subject and the Divine One. This may be called worship, or adoration, and may have its own outward symbol.

Thus is the thesis established that man worships the Divine, and loves beauty or perfection, because

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he is moral; because the moral and æsthetic ideal requires not only a loving commonwealth, but the adjustment of its environment to the utmost caprice or aspiration of the loving souls therein by the love and beneficence of the sole Omnipotence.

As long, then, as the Intelligent Power which originated and governs all things is not thought as purely evil, as long as it is not thought as purely and indiscriminately good, but as loving, and requiring, and energizing after reciprocal love, religion must abide; and a system of applied ethics can only be upon this presupposition. There is no need of any science of human duty if the Divinity is purely evil, or merely arbitrary and indifferent. Any attempt at such a system is only an amusement for the mind, and no one is bound by its requirements. And a trustworthy system of human duty must take account of the evidence that the Divinity is not purely and indiscriminately good, but loving, and therefore must present a different attitude towards the unloving from that it does to the loving,—that its love is not pure goodness, but Justice. This, then, the different treatment of such, seen clearly to be possible and actual (though here its ways are obscure and sometimes past finding out), must be taken into the account if we would formulate rules for human action; for if such rules cannot but respect the consequences of moral activity, these bestowals of favor or disfavor, of physical good or ill, these cannot be spared from the consideration. All this will complicate so greatly the endeavor to furnish such formulated rules, that the uncertainty in which we will

often find ourselves will frequently force us back into a confession of ignorance and start a supplication that our ignorance may be overlooked and our mistakes condoned. Faith and prayer, then, are the ultimate resorts of the moral mind, as such, as well as of the religious mind, as such. The complete æsthetic consciousness alone will dispense with faith and prayer,—or rather, prayer will receive a new definition, and be only adoring love, and absolute confidence, rather than hesitating trust, as now.

This, then, is the pathway in which men must advance, and will, sooner or later, advance, with mutual agreement and helpfulness. Let us hope, too, that those whose philosophy has led logically to the conclusion that the Ruler of the universe is evil, will pause on the brink of this abyss and begin to retrace their steps. The twilight in the other direction will brighten and lead at last to the supernal Light. No one can be faulted who has been brought to this dark and unconsoling abyss. Even the loving soul sometimes finds itself temporarily there. But the intensity with which its love cries out against it is the proof that this love is the strongest, and, since it will not, cannot undergo extinction. It is ever tied by an elastic cord, which never can be severed, and whose farther end is the Absolute itself.

CHAPTER XIV

POSSIBILITY OF PURE EVIL

IS it possible that all human intelligences can be brought to agree in the endeavor to realize the moral ideal, the Divine intent, the loving commonwealth ?

Were there a sufficient ground to give an affirmative reply to this question, the problem of morality would be much simplified, and moral effort would receive undying stimulus. A negative reply must needs discourage activity, make it less hopeful and enthusiastic, and throw upon it the task of discrimination. Ordinary observation—which may be thought, however, to be unreflecting and superficial—inclines to the negative reply, since moral evil seems so persistent and strong, transgression so determined and wilful, the human will so weak before temptation. But a profounder analysis may incline to the conviction that what is called moral evil is only a subjective form of moral good. A man may refuse subjection to any alleged authoritative and conventional standard of behavior, and to consider it as the absolute and permanent form of moral good. He may have an ideal that seems to him

more rational; and on its account justifies his revolt against conventional morality and its supporting institutions, regarding them not as finalities, but as temporary makeshifts. He is well prepared to justify his own revolutionary endeavor after another political and social state, regarding this as more valid on grounds of reason than that he strives to overturn. Injustice, he thinks, may be met by injustice; or he may regard his action as only self-defence, or an attempt to destroy the immediate wrong in the hope of a subsequent right. This is the reasoning of the thoughtful anarchist, who thinks he only carries to an extreme what others have done in milder form and been justified therefor; and his argument can only be successfully met by calling his attention to the need and the function of institutions in the onward moral progress of mankind. But to call him absolutely evil on account of his revolt is indefensible. His inmost reason is not convinced that what he does is any more contrary to the moral ideal than what he opposes. Thus it appears that moral good has taken for him this form instead of the conventional one; and so far there is no evidence that he may not be brought to agree in the endeavor to realize the loving commonwealth.

But aside from all this, and cases like it that might be considered in the same way, the evidence is abundant that it is possible for human beings to wander so far away from the moral pathway, or from any of the deviations that ultimately lead into it, that we cannot descry any way of successful return.

The instances may not be many—but there are some and they are very puzzling—wherein men have shown themselves so wantonly cruel, so profoundly selfish, that we can find no thought-process by which they can justify these their actions to their own reason. Reason seems to have been dethroned, and the brute impulses alone allowed to sway thought, feeling, and conduct. Here, however, though reason with its moral distinctions seems to have sunk to sleep, these are not extinct, and it is not impossible to think that conscience may yet awaken. If so, a reverse process is thinkable, and such a man is still recoverable. Pure evil has not yet been reached. Sensuality by itself alone, or bloodthirstiness by itself alone, does not necessarily conduct to pure evil. They are inherited propulsions of the animal nature; and a man's thought may even justify their outbreak. The sensualist may aver that more or less gratification is prohibited or permitted only according to conventional standards which are fluctuating; and he may assert his right to make his own standard. And the cruel man may say that he is no more cruel than nature, or the ruler of nature. He who starves his victim slowly in the dungeon may say that he does no more than the ruler of nature does when he allows the shipwrecked mariners to feed upon human flesh, and thereafter to perish. He who burns his victim at the stake, and dances with delight before the evidences of agony, may think that he does no more than does the Ruler of nature when He permits the flames of the burning railway carriage to consume

its pent-up victims. There is some inward thought-process, be sure, by which any cruel one justifies his conduct to his own understanding. But all these things—sensuality, cruelty, cunning, and pride—do lead onward towards pure evil. But that is only reached when the immoral conduct becomes what we call *devilish*, *i. e.*, when it is chosen simply because it is the opposite of good, and is the assertion of one's own spiritual independence. And we can readily think of one who violates no political prescriptions or social laws, whom even public opinion may not only not condemn, but even commend, yet whose whole life is supremely selfish, whose apparently good actions are the result of a selfish calculation, and who is cunning enough to shun and escape all retribution. Such an one seems to our thought to have gone farther towards pure evil than the sensualist or the tyrant. And although he truckles to the forces about him, to what we call providential laws, and consents to use them, and prides himself on his consummate prudence, yet the belief that he has thus outwitted the Supreme Power is a long step towards pure evil. Still, he may think and say to himself that he only does consciously, and with full knowledge of what he is doing, what others do unconsciously, and concealing from themselves their true motives,—that he is no worse, but only more honest than they. But, confessedly, for such an one there is no security that, if his own ends required, he would not violate the laws in which he now acquiesces, and become tyrannical and cruel. But should his social environment, or nature, or the

Power which rules nature, become hostile and refuse him his accustomed success, then would arrive the test whether he would become purely evil or not. He may think, "My prudence has availed me thus far, but now it fails me. I must give up. I can no longer sway. I submit of necessity to the hostility which now arrests me, but should that hostility relax, and my success again become possible, I shall resume my use for my own ends of the environment thus furnished me." Such persistence looks very like pure evil, and there is but one step farther (if that be another step, or only a parallel one, and one of the two forms which pure evil may assume), and instead of, or beyond, the selfish resignation which still waits its opportunity, viz.: that which betakes itself to open defiance, whether overt rebellion be possible or not. In the one case the negative attitude seems to respect the environment, which includes all other created things and beings; in the other it respects the Intelligent Power, the personal One, God Himself. There is no doubt that such a negative attitude as either of these is thinkable, and even imaginable. It exists, in shadowy incoherence, behind or within every commission of what we call "wilful sin." The final question, after these others, which we must sadly, hopefully, and doubtfully put, is whether, when moral evil is thus presented to the mind in its pure form, the human creature may not decline it as his form of being. It so contradicts the innate predispositions of the human structure, that it would seem that even these would solicit and enable a return. But if all environment be

withdrawn, or greatly impoverished, and hence escape our possible thought, we do not see how from the resources of the spiritual self it can find method of return, or what would create the desire of return. Here our knowledge stops, and a speculative solution of this problem is impossible. Dogmatics here steps in with its rash and confident assertions, and affirms either an universal restoration, or an unending contradiction and a persistent Dualism. It is well and providential, perhaps, that the Christian Church has never committed itself to either dogmatic utterance, though obliged to assume the last as a possible and as a working hypothesis. Forever, in its feeling and in spite of all avowals, will the human soul vibrate between the two.

Thus we are obliged to say that there is no reply that we can give with confidence to the question whether, here or hereafter, all human intelligences can be brought to agree to endeavor to realize the moral ideal. Yet our modes of moral activity will be affected, and will oscillate, according as one or the other result seems more probable. Under this uncertainty, then, we must formulate our rules for moral action. Yet the result of the foregoing speculative endeavor will have made the task somewhat easier. We do not know, with satisfying clearness, indeed, how nearly here on earth we can approximate the realization of the moral ideal; but we have done much for ourselves in finding out that pure evil, even if possible, cannot be located, and that much conventionally called "moral evil" is a form of moral good itself — a subjective form, however,

and one which requires correction in order to have objective validity. And even if such agreement were possible, and the ideal state should be realized by some future generation on the earth, still the entire problem would be unsolved, since the ideal of the loving commonwealth requires that the past generations also shall be brought into agreement. Speculatively we can see no way in which this can be done, yet we have no right dogmatically to deny its possibility, for we may sink back upon the conviction that as long as the human being stops short of pure evil, a change in the environment may supply the conditions for recovery. All will depend upon the question whether pure evil is possible. Metaphysically we see that it *is* possible. Our trust in the divine love alone makes us hope that it is morally impossible. No dogmatic assertion either way is legitimate, and our consolation is that the uncertainty creates a test and trial of our faith in the divine love, and thereby secures an increase of spiritual strength.

CHAPTER XV

THE MORAL AIM—THE FIELD OF MORAL INQUIRY

IF, as the result of our careful thinking, we have reached the conclusion that the loving commonwealth, with physical adjustment thereto, and with environment correspondent, flexible, and fluent, is the aim or intent of God in His human creation, and is indeed the final cause of the entire universe; and are able to convince others of this,—to show that it alone satisfies the reason and the æsthetic demand, that this is the key by which to read all physical change and development, and all progress in human history, as the only idea which can unify and illumine them; if, having solved thereby everything but the one riddle, viz.: the acts whereby the contradiction of moral evil was introduced,—then, supposing that this ideal is objectified or put before the human subject, and is clarified and illustrated, has he therefrom and thereby a sufficient guide for his moral activity? Supposing that the end in his mind is plain, and the motive-spring of responsive love is plain and strong, can these alone furnish an infallible criterion for his action, and enable him without mistake to construct motives whose realization will without impediment conduce to the ideal end?

It is evident that we must answer this question in the negative, since, to say no more, every such human soul finds itself sometimes in a faltering attitude. If all men were agreed to act in this way with motive-spring of perfect purity and sufficient strength, the question might receive an affirmative reply. It cannot, simply because there is no such agreement. The consequences of right action do not flow easily and uninterruptedly in one direction, but are met by counter-currents. Hence there is a perpetual conflict of motives and a clashing of results. If, then, the intent of the Divine Ruler is to be accomplished, there is need that these same consequences shall be overruled and adjusted to this same end. The spiritual contradiction may remain, and the objective results of the same will remain,—but *under law*, unerring no matter how complex, and this law will surely accomplish the end. Hence the objective content of all action, moral or immoral, must still be figured as under the control of the good principle, and as moving and changing surely, though seemingly often by an uneven and interrupted progression, towards the ultimate good. The hold which the evil spiritual principle may have upon the objective content of human action is therefore insecure, only momentary, or only apparent, and may, even, be thought as *nil*. This ability, springing from human freedom and liberty, to modify the environment, to divert the forces of the universe to individualistic ends, may or may not undergo abatement. The task of the providential overruling may be a constant quantity, or grow more or less; but if

good is stronger than evil, one may rightly think that it will grow less, and that the power of the evil principle is really undergoing diminution; that its material is perpetually escaping from its hand; that its resources are diminishing and must needs go to a vanishing-point when the organism which now enables it to divert force is dissolved, and it is reduced either to spiritual purity or to some set of relations to the abstract material of the physical universe such as defies imagination now, and the thought of which, even, is purely abstract. But now—in the mundane sphere—these consequences of evil which have to be overruled for good unquestionably exist. How, then, with this opposition perpetually recurring, can the loving will move always intelligently towards its proper end; how can it see clearly, always, what is its present duty?

Men have long since perceived and acknowledged this difficulty, have felt the need of, and have formulated, rules and maxims for present action, whose adoption, when generally acknowledged, has been in consequence of the conviction that they conduced to the realization of the moral end. Yet even those most commonly admitted sometimes meet with doubt and hesitation. There are times when negative precepts fail us, and cannot convincingly be adjusted to the ultimate end. They are seen to be only intermediate and provisional; *e. g.*, "Thou shalt not kill," which means, indeed, "Thou shalt not murder," but which necessitates an inquiry, sometimes very difficult and doubtful, what, in acts of

homicide, constitutes "murder." Again, "Thou shalt not steal," which requires practically an adjustment to the social and political condition, in which what is stealing at one time or place is not so at another; and in times of changing social and political conditions the difficulties of determining what is right in this respect are insuperable. Emergencies often arise when men, whose aim is to do right, in spite of these precepts, are doubtful what to do.

Of more immediate worth for influencing human action are such rules when put in the positive form; *e. g.*, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But even here, what true self-love requires is sometimes so difficult to determine, that we hesitate between two very different lines of conduct to our neighbor. Concretely, this precept, too, may thus sometimes fail us. The final and quintessent form which the moral law can assume as a rule of action, and than which human inquiry can go no farther, was first enunciated by Jesus Christ, in the words, "As I have loved you, so ought ye to love one another." This would, indeed, be no "new commandment," were it simply the advice of one human being to another to be willing to go to the same length of sacrifice, if needful, as he himself would do, or had done. As a maxim it is "new," and glorified, only when the sacrifice is asserted of God Himself, as involving the limitation of Himself to the uttermost in His *magna opera*, the conception and the death of Jesus Christ. Thus, only in the sacrificial mind responding to the divine sacrificial love, which, therefore, is with all one's heart and mind

and strength, is it possible to love perfectly. Yet even when this requirement of the responsive love which flows toward God, and beyond Him to all that can be loved, is broken up into rules and maxims and adaptations to present conduct, it is evident that these are not exhaustive, and that no one can be put in such concrete shape as to have universal validity and obligation. Whether one should or should not die for another would require a distinct inquiry in every particular case in which the question should be asked. Only divine wisdom could determine the true direction of self-sacrifice, even though the willingness for it were pure and strong and limitless.

But although all particular moral rules or maxims must have this flexibility, and are occasionally uncertain as to their obligation, let us not undervalue them. Men have furnished them for each other and for the totality, as needful for the preservation of society, of harmony, peace, and well-being; and God has furnished them for the children of men. After all, we enjoy a larger liberty with them than we should without them. Instead of being fetters they are aids to freedom, and do not narrow, but enlarge, its sphere, however they may limit it. But if, as has been shown, all such rules as are put forth as guides for present emergency, at times require modification, or change, or new interpretation, and since, thus, applied morality is an endless science, it is needful that each generation, or era, shall re-think the matter, and see if any change in matter or in expression is required. And in order, at any

time, to do this, all the material must be accumulated, all the considerations that may affect the question must be gathered and availed of. The defect of many schemes of applied morality has been that this has not been done, because, through ignorance, or of purpose, there has been a neglect of something, or of much, that ought to have entered into the consideration. Hence the very inquiry receives a bias at the start from the religion, the philosophy, the science, or the politics of the inquirer. This is the reason why moral treatises continue to be produced in profusion. And here, more eminently than elsewhere, is needed that dispassionate quality of the human mind which loves truth for its own sake, which is never afraid to doubt, which endeavors to slough off from itself the blinding and sometimes smothering influence of any identification whatever, which, even in crucifying its own pride, shows as extreme a form of self-sacrifice as ever the human soul exhibits. In no inquiry more than in this, which asks what is human duty, is it required that we should "fear not."

The aims, then, of a treatise on applied morality are: (1) To set forth in form clear and satisfactory those maxims for human duty which are least likely to be challenged, which are comparatively unchangeable; and if any exception to such can occur to thought or imagination, to impart what help can be given in such an emergency.

(2) To gather in convenient form those rules or precepts which are constantly undergoing modification from social, political, scientific, and religious

movements and conditions; and since they may or must be changed, to furnish cautions and aids in making such change.

(3) To show how all or most rules for human duty have been, and must always be, affected by the existence of *Institutions*,—the family, the state, the church, and even voluntary associations.

(4) To advise what had best be done when all light for the solution of a moral question fails.

All this is a field so large that each separate inquiry might easily be expanded into an independent treatise. The present author here gives his own statement of these, and while he acknowledges that he cannot treat any one of them exhaustively, he yet strives to exhibit them in right relation to each other; and to point out what order or subordination can be vindicated as most rational, satisfactory, and helpful.

CHAPTER XVI

INSTITUTIONS

THE Divine will or intent for mankind, the end or purpose for the race, though to be realized on man's part by free individual action, is yet universal in its compass. No one is emancipated from its obligation. But it cannot satisfactorily be decided that every individual man, even when it becomes known, and its obligation confessed, will coincide with the others in the endeavor to make this ideal end real. It can neither be asserted nor denied that there will be a *residuum*, in which each soul will have withdrawn from any actual, will decline the aim of the ideal harmony, and retire upon the pinnacle of pure evil. Whether this be so or not, the ideal remains the same,—a completed organism, wherein each individual finds a part of himself in the being of every other. Hence the aim to be steadily kept in view in all moral action is the completed brotherhood. As the means of knowledge of each other which men have are so limited, this ideal can never be made real here on earth more than approximately. With the best intentions blunders will be inevitable. It must wait till these

means are replaced by others, more fluent and serviceable; in which case there will be nothing to hinder the knowledge by each soul of each and every other's character, and all action will be fully understood in its motive and its results. Now, there can be only a gradual approximation to such a state of things. But when the moral history of mankind was to be started, the idea that his own well-being was to be derived from a certain set of relations to others, and from no other, must have been, in some form and by some means, imprinted upon the consciousness of the aboriginal man. After-experience only showed him what was already there. Mutual dependence, in some sort, must have sprung from the very existence and contiguity of more than one. In the sexual relation we have the full idea foreshadowed, and in the family imaged. If the race sprang from one pair, it soon extended itself, and the realization of the idea became a more complex matter, and hence more difficult. If it sprang from many pairs, the difficulty was increased at the start. But anyhow, through the existence of the family, the idea of mutual interdependence was started and enlivened, and by it the moral life of the race began and was fostered. Concretely the human being becomes moral perforce, and by the necessities of prolonging his existence. Physical instincts and mental sympathies are part of his structure, foreshadowed even in the animal sphere below him. In the need of the care that the female and her newly born children must receive, in the prolonged infancy, and in the devotion of the mother thence

required, in the dependence of the children upon the parents,—in all this we have already the principle of sacrifice exhibited as the form of all concrete morality. Thus the race starts with sacrifice, and manifests it and follows it in and through more and more complicated stages, and will still follow it till it shall be transmuted into spontaneity, in which case dependence will not be compelled nor necessary, but free and glad, and each one will pour from his own fulness, and find delight in the outgoing. In the ideal family we have then already the *bonum consummatum* symbolized, foreshadowed, and measurably realized. In the mutual and constant sacrifice, which is ever ceasing to be sacrificial, in the respect and reverence, which are a form of worship, we see beforehand some of the characteristics of the perfect state. As children grow, and subjective caprice shows itself, the need and the obligation of respect and reverence for parents become intensified. The demands upon sacrifice become greater on both sides. Hence the need of *law*, or abstract rules convenient for memory, becomes apparent. The family assumes more and more a political aspect. Its wisdom becomes enshrined in rules or laws which are objected to every member of it, as wise, necessary, rational, and hence obligatory. They are acknowledged as such not only because they are seen to be needed for the present welfare, but because they are seen to preserve the idea of needful sacrifice fresh and vivid. Differences of will, rivalries, occur among the children. These must be appeased, and rules devised to adjust them. The task of the parent

becomes great, to harmonize these, and to preserve himself cool and dispassionate and just. Thus by degrees arises a system of laws, objective and super-imposed, as well as subjective and self-imposed. We have thus an *Institution*, springing necessarily from the conditions of human life, therefore divine in its origin, and by this is the moral life of mankind begun and nourished.

Should such a state of things as polygamy or polyandry exist, the internal difficulties and the need of restraints appear earlier and are more complicated. Some power must adjust the more numerous relations, and quell the actual rivalries, and provide against the possible ones. The system of laws is earlier enlarged.

By and by families, or groups of them, become, through independent needs, separated by space, yet within reach of each other. If the idea of brotherhood, and of well-being or full being for the individual, to be derived from his relations to all others, is to be preserved, possible disagreements between these must be foreseen and provided for when possible, and adjusted when they do occur. Some agreement must be had, among all these individuals and families or groups, to defer to some self-imposed maxims; and, in default of a settlement under these, to some tribunal of reference, by which these differences may be appeased and harmonized. Reflection and deliberate choice may provide such, and it be the result of mutual consent. Or it may spring from some physical necessity, or from the need to protect against hostility, and the consequent

requirement to lodge unusual power with some individual of greater wisdom, strength, or skill than the residue. Some authority inevitably arises, to which it is wise, or necessary, to defer. It must come to exist, because, in human ignorance and imperfection, the social and progressive life cannot otherwise be. Since it is rational and necessary, it is of divine origin, and therefore obligatory. Thus has arisen government, and, step by step, the tribe, the nation, the state. This grows larger and more complicated as numbers increase and relations multiply. It foreshadows, even in its imperfection, the ideal end, the human brotherhood. Mutual dependence grows more general and entire as man uses his powers and develops his possibilities, and as civilization progresses. It is quite possible to think and imagine that in this progress the needful sacrifices may have become so habitual as to cease to be sacrifices and merge into spontaneity. Thus we have another symbol and foreshadowing of the *bonum consummatum*. But, in the forward progress, particular rules for human duty must become more numerous and refined, and collisions and adjustments become more imperative between the requirements of duty to one's self, to one's family, and to the state.

Voluntary consociations come to be, which induces a *quasi* obligation between the members of the same. How to adjust and subordinate these to the superior obligations springing from the family and the state is often a difficult problem. These are not divine institutions. They are not necessary,

and have no permanence, as have the others. Therefore in case of conflict their internal obligations must give way. Reversing this order is a common form of moral transgression in our own day.

As the human race increases in number, independent states, rival nations, come to be, and thus new considerations are introduced, complicating the questions of human obligation. And so International Ethics becomes a distinct branch of the entire science. The origin of any such independent nationality may not have been necessary or morally right. To determine whether it was or was not is usually a difficult problem. But whether so or not, if it have come concretely to exist, and have become autonomic, no one can refuse obedience without a rival usurpation; and no other nation can refuse to recognize it without countenancing a possible revolution, whose success will be uncertain. It must take its place among the nations, and the obligations thence ensuing are legitimate. At any such period of revolutionary transition, few general rules, comparatively, for moral action can be had, and each individual must settle the question of duty for himself. On this account it is the duty of the successful to pardon the unsuccessful, unless the safety of the state require otherwise. But if the new state can maintain itself in its autonomy, it must be thought to be comprised in the providential plan, and therefore to have the divine sanction. It has become the larger family, and serves the purposes for which states have come to exist.

But the rivalry between the nations seems to

postpone the realization of the ideal, of the mutually dependent brotherhood. The political conscience is less restrained than the social one, and more readily finds excuses and justification for its immoral designs and actions. Yet this very fact shows that the existence of rival nations is needful in order that men may be subjected to this very trial, which will show how strong is their devotion to the moral ideal, and whether it can meet this test. Thus they become a part of the machinery for the education of the human race. It is impossible with any great confidence to forecast history, but though in our own time political morality does not seem to have been much improved, the very fact that it is more frequently questioned and faulted betokens a step forward in moral progress. The attitude of the Christian nations towards each other, as shown by their standing armies and armed fleets, comes more and more to be criticised, and its abnormality confessed with shame. The question comes persistently, How can these nations and peoples be pacified and unified? What can bind them together that is stronger than these divellent tendencies? Has the divine purpose in the institutions thus far regarded fallen short of the ultimate purpose, and has God yet another in reserve? These institutions have carried mankind along thus far, serving the needful results, but other results show the defects and failures and shortcomings. Is there still another institution whose purpose is to appease these rivalries, to make a brotherhood of nations, which shall by and by merge into an universal nation, or at least make

something like a brotherhood of individuals? If there be anything claiming to be this, we cannot avoid its consideration. But if not, or if the claim, after examination, be rejected, can we then look forward to the time when governments, as representing nations, shall, by their mental insight and moral progress, have come to recognize that they exist not for themselves alone, but for a further end,—for the unification of humanity, and thereby the development and improvement of the individual to a degree now unsuspected? The progress towards the recognition of this has been very slow indeed, but none the less real, and, if real, we may anticipate an accelerated speed.

To the old Greeks such a federation of nations seemed impossible, and the morality even of their best thinkers did not extend so far. In their thought the different communities must continue to exist apart; and there was no sufficient security that friendliness among them might not at any time give way to hostility. No such conception as a human brotherhood, and that men have rights springing from their humanity profounder than those which spring from their citizenship, was explicit in their thought. Hence slavery was legitimate if found needful for the security and welfare of the state. They did not, and could not, anticipate the time when nations should be bound by new ties, and be found helpful, or needful, or even necessary to each other's welfare.¹

¹ See Appendix B.

Here then we see disclosed the final cause of the inventions of modern times, which render life and movement easier and more rapid. These are thus vindicated as part of the providential plan for the moral education of the human race. Thereby nations have become dependent upon each other, as well as the individuals of one nation more and more upon each other. Sacrifice has become habitual, is involuntary, or passively submitted to; and new links are forged in every century or even decade, and the speed of their manufacture is constantly accelerated.

Thus steadily grows up a system of international ethics, becoming less selfish at intervals, growing shorter all the while, and wider in extent, among the enlightened nations, whose governments may also have become capable of a higher range of motives. They are drawn, century after century, closer and closer to each other, and the conception is dawning upon them, with increasing clearness, of some tribunal to settle their disputes other than the arbitrament of war. The civilized nations will only consent to this, however, when the conviction is more generally diffused that they exist for a higher end and wider purpose than their individual welfare, an end for which nations must make sacrifices to each other, as individuals of the same nation also should do. Should they ever bind themselves together in this way, disband their armies, or reduce them to the dimensions required for police, and turn their men-of-war into merchantmen, that would be the most important and hopeful revolution ever occurring

in the world's political history. Such a bond between nations, such a new unity, must have its outward symbol, or expression,—some machinery which, though clumsy at first, and slowly moving, will at length become as smooth in its motion as the ordinary governmental machinery now is.

But it will not be a perfect symbol of the ideal human brotherhood which justifies it, because it will include only the advanced nations,—the enlightened part of the human race. The outlying portions, which exist in a state of moral development so much lower, must be drawn up to the elevation of the others, and crystallize at length into independent states, securely rooted, and determined by geographical and other economical conditions. The world is moving forward in this direction, though the end seems still distant—yet nearer for each new generation. The savage races are disappearing, or else have started in the process of assimilation with the civilized ones. The barbarous and partially civilized communities are being reached, and the possibility becomes yearly more apparent that this planet will ultimately show a collection of autonomic nations, each with its internal life and obligations, and in the process of advance, yet related to each other by a common recognition of the end of their existence, and by a mutual obligation to work together to realize the human brotherhood and the ultimate commonwealth.

This unification of the nations was once attempted and partially realized, in mediæval times, by the Roman papacy. Here was a claim of authority,

and a power of fluctuating strength, demanding the subservience of all, and that to it empires, kingdoms, and republics should alike submit. Theoretically it held in view the true idea, the brotherhood of men, and was supposed to decide the disputes between the nations and tribes according to the requirements of this idea. History has shown that it did good service during the formative period of modern civilization. But when the nations had grown more enlightened it could no longer maintain itself in power to accomplish the object, and its claim of authority came to be denied. Had its motives been always perfectly pure, and unbiased by selfish and narrower ends, it might have maintained itself longer. The theory exists still, and has its own speciousness. It is not unlikely that in the future the claim, which has never been abandoned, will again be more widely admitted. The legitimacy of it will then be re-examined, and a conclusion reached whether it is founded upon a sound philosophy, and whether its dogmatic support is clear and strong. Should the ideal political condition above outlined ever be reached, and the nationalities seek some symbol of their unity—some tribunal of reference for their disagreements—the old papal claim will again be strongly presented, as something ready at hand and fulfilling the requirement. Nothing else has ever so clearly claimed to be, in idea, the symbol of human brotherhood. Nothing other, should it fail of maintaining its claim by realizing the idea according to the law of love, could be guilty of so great apostasy. If it has failed in the past, men will ask

more urgently, What security is there that it will not fail again?

It may be questioned whether the symbol of the universal human brotherhood can rightly be called "a Church." That is founded upon another idea. It is an *ecclesia*, a selection of a portion of mankind to constitute an organization, which by its growing purity and perfection shall become an *organism*. Hence it recognizes the existence and possible obduracy or opposition of the outlying portion. As such an *ecclesia* it does not succeed chronologically or logically, as a stage in the moral history of mankind; but is, from the time of its foundation, a perennial accompaniment of the same, and intended to supplement the deficiency of the same at any stage of its history. If the moral life of mankind begins by the requirements of the family, and is continued by those of the state, and further continued by those of the federation of states,—this last, this federation, could not rightly be called an *ecclesia*. No mere limited selection from each and every state, thus constituting an *ecclesia*, could represent the universal human brotherhood. The Roman definition of an *imperium super imperia* does not represent any *ecclesia*, but is a superadded claim, to be validated upon independent grounds. Even admitting that there is sufficient dogmatic sanction for the existence of the papacy, this will only show its claim to rule the *ecclesia*, and not entire humanity. Its moral *dicta*, therefore, can never be put in universal form. Not by any right, then, that could be shown, but only by courtesy, could

the papacy ever become a tribunal of reference in national disputes. Any other religious body than the Roman Church would readily confess the inadequacy of its present machinery to supply the want in such an emergency. And the imperfection of the work of this Church in the past, and its inability to maintain itself without criticism, would cause its claim, in the future, to be regarded with suspicion.

The Christian Church must claim to be a divine Institution only upon dogmatic grounds. It will require an independent examination to decide whether these are valid. And if it becomes certain, or even probable, that they are, then the speculative task is thrown upon us to determine what part or stage in the world's moral history this particular institution claims to occupy, and has occupied. Its idea is certainly very profound, and, if true, human history cannot rightly proceed except as determined by it; nor can life-plans be formed except by regarding its claims; and the whole question of moral obligation, and all questions of duty, must receive modification. If true, morality is only a complete science as affected by it, and all other moral schemes are imperfect.¹

¹ See Appendix B.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIANITY A TRUE PHILOSOPHY— SUPERSTITION

IT is one thing to discuss a moral problem of the time, about the solution of which men are hesitating, to detect the truths in the arguments *pro* and *con*, and to harmonize them so as to present a satisfactory result;—or, in a question for the individual conscience, to eliminate disturbing elements and make as clear as possible the immediate duty;—and quite another thing to furnish a code of rules of universal extent and obligation, wherein every duty is seen to be related to every other duty, and the obligation of each is dependent upon the rationality of the end or intent of the whole,—thus to make Morality wear the semblance of an exact science.

Thus far every such attempt as this last has found its work beset with questions which multiplied themselves endlessly, and that more was yet before it than it had left behind it. Exhausted in the endeavor, some moralists, at a certain stage of their procedure, have found themselves obliged to refer the unresolved questions to some existing authority, thus exhibiting two kinds of moral obligation.

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And some have returned to unity by making an arbitrary will the source of obligation, instead of the eternal fitness, harmony, and beauty, which are a revelation of the mind of the First Principle. Thus the doubt emerges whether such a reasoned code is possible; and, if not, it is a *desideratum* to discover the limit of possible attainment in this endeavor.

The explanation of the failure of such attempts, or the fragmentariness of the results, is, that rules of conduct of universal extent must needs be cast in abstract form. In the application of the same to concrete cases many such rules may, indeed, serve the immediate requirement; but in many other cases no serviceable rule is at hand. Something in the objective condition or the subjective attitude is unique, and solution is required for an entirely new question. *Ex gratia*, the one precept, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," may be accepted as of universal extent and obligation, but the inquirer is not at all helped thereby as to how he shall manifest his love to his neighbor. In such an inquiry the subjective condition of each must enter into the consideration, and in this regard no two individuals are alike, and their consequent relations are different and cannot be expressed in a general formula. *Love* is more than a sentiment or an emotion. It is active, and must overflow. What is one to do because he loves his neighbor? Is he to relieve his temporal wants only? Is he to endeavor to enlighten and expand his intellect so as to make his perception of his duty clear? Is he to seek to penetrate to the roots of his neighbor's character

and endeavor to induce him also to adopt as his own particular maxim, to "Love thy neighbor as thyself?" Must his ultimate and absorbing aim be to make this, his neighbor, a worthy thing in the universe, and to start him in the career towards perfection? If this last be the endeavor, and the only true fulfillment of the precept, while not disregarding the others, still a choice of means is required to accomplish this purpose, and these will differ in every particular case. Absolute accuracy in the adoption of a rule of conduct which would cover all cases is unattainable. The process of subdivision spins itself out endlessly. In all the elaborate treatises which have aimed after a complete moral code, each *quasi* general rule multiplies itself into many units, each of which, again, may require a similar multiplication. The attempt always stops somewhere, and some external authority, or the individual conscience, is invoked, and is left to take care of the *residuum*. The attempt after completeness is as fruitless as would be the attempt to map out by triangulation the infinite space. Under what conditions and limitations, then, can the moralist attain any accuracy?

We claim to have successfully shown that objective rightness in moral conduct is impossible without subjective rightness,—that the ideal to be realized requires absolutely that each moral agent shall be actuated by the one true motive-spring. Ere, then, a standard for objective morality having universal obligation, and subject to no change from changing external conditions, can be furnished,

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unanimity in the adoption of the true motive-spring must be predicated. All action from any other motive-spring than this can only further the ideal end as the material content of such action is wrought up by the Supreme Providence into a system of means. The ideal end is thus only circuitously and not directly furthered; and the actor, as not moved by the true motive-spring, still remains an alien in the progressive harmonization. Also, perpetually, action from the insufficient motive-spring will be found in conflict with other action from some insufficient motive-spring; and the activity is wasted, and may or must retard the stream of progress towards the realization of the ideal. Could all be found or induced to act from the sole true motive-spring, then the material content of such action would be, with progressive knowledge, continually adjusted and improved as it was found to further the ideal end. The *primum*, therefore, of all moral rules must be, "act from this motive-spring and no other, *i. e.*, Love God responsively to His own love appealing to our faith; and all else as God loves." In the normal constitution of human nature all inferior and provisional motive-springs blend into and find their harmony and unity in this.

But as long as individual men, and races of men, continue to act from other motive-springs, interfering with this, or exclusive of this, no rule of universal service would be accepted, or could be had, to govern human conduct. Every other rule, not flowing from the above supreme rule and subordinated to it, must, sooner or later, find some contradicting

rule; and, instead of a progressive harmonization, we must have discordant cataclysms in the moral world perennially breaking forth.

That all men may be induced to adopt the true motive-spring may seem doubtful; but the faith that they may be still endures, and is the impelling principle of Christian moralists. Any approximation towards such a state of things on this planet is encouragement. Meanwhile the endeavor must be to create a science of advancing clearness for those who have adopted the true motive-spring. For those remaining, other rules of action, the results of which are the same as the objective results of the action of those who are moved by the true motive-spring, may be furnished. These, however, will often be found to be of only temporary service, and be required to give place to other rules adapted to the then existing social situation.

And even for these the attempt must be limited to those who are likely to welcome or receive such aid—to the progressive civilizations of the time. In these are now to be found increasing numbers of men who love the truth, and are moving towards it, and who have faith in their own possible agreement. The objective results of thoughtful action from such sources will progressively move towards completer agreement.

For the unenlightened peoples, seemingly out of the currents of the world's progress, other rules must be devised and advice given. The question may, however, arise, whether there is any endeavor after their moral amelioration likely to be permanently

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successful, except to impart the intelligence to understand, and the persuasion to adopt the true motive-spring, though the aid of a mere prudential morality must be superadded. This true motive-spring is simpler, more comprehensible, and more likely to be welcomed by the savage mind than the more abstract motive-springs of rational moralists, of any class whatever.

We abandon the attempt, therefore, to furnish a moral code of universal service. So far as any abstract rule can be adapted to concrete problems the attempt must be made to formulate such a code for the enlightened peoples only. Upon such the adoption of the true motive-spring can be more readily urged. From some it meets with a ready acceptance; from others a more deliberate rejection than it meets with from the unenlightened peoples. Since, however, in the cultured communities there are multitudes who do not act from the true motive-spring consciously or avowedly (though some may do it unconsciously), but pursue either individual ends, or seemingly universal ends, and who, in the latter case are altruists in appearance and avowal, though without the cardinal principle of an altruism which alone is profoundly rational, the question arises, What can be done for them? What rules of expediency can be had, adapted to their imperfect aims, and yet, so far as objective results are concerned, be in agreement with the immediate aims, and the objective results of the same, of those who act from the true motive-spring? In this region of inquiry lie all the anxious moral

problems of the time. The course commonly and rightly taken is to endeavor to bring about a more general culture, to improve the common intelligence, to induce men to *think* and to strive to act rationally. Since man possesses reason, it can always be appealed to, and possibly corrected. We go on to speak and write as if agreement in the results of thinking may be had. We do not despair to bring about a rational acquiescence in truth. But for many to reach the clear vision numberless obstructing clouds are to be dissipated. Indeed, men can never be induced to agree in the selection of means while they are disagreed as to the end that is to unify and give worth to these means, or while holding different opinions as to the possibility of its realization. To bring about agreement in this respect, to unify human thinking as to human destiny, seems an attainment as problematical and far distant as to obtain dominion over the forces of nature. Both aims recede as we contemplate the impediments, and the vision of the far future is very dim. But man has been gaining constantly in his knowledge and control of the forces of nature, and is very sanguine as to his future attainments. There is a limit somewhere, he knows, but he cannot describe its conditions. With similar hopefulness he persists in his endeavor to unify human thinking, and believes that agreement in the results of it, so far as moral problems are concerned,—which concern so nearly human welfare and destiny,—can at length be reached, for a part of the human race at least. If, at or near the close of human development (if there

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is to be such a close), there is to be agreement, or diametrical antagonism, this vision is obscure, this vaticination doubtful, and we live on in mingled and fluctuating hope and despondency.

If human thinking is to be guided and corrected, and its results harmonized, the first and indispensable thing to be done is to make men, or those men who guide the others, agreed as to their philosophy of the universe. No agreement anterior, or merely superficial, will serve other than a temporary purpose, and be an intermediate *stadium* of rest, whence to survey what is still beyond. The end will be still distant, and the pathway to it unsteady and beset with new fluctuations—nay, will often turn round to the starting-point. A true philosophy of the universe must furnish a First Principle that will satisfy the reason as adequate to account for all existence and all change. We have already, in this book, as in another work of ours,¹ given such a First Principle. More or less clearly and explicitly those whom we regard as the profoundest and healthiest thinkers of the time—and, indeed, of all time, for the last two thousand years, notably the great poets of mankind—have adopted such a First Principle; and in our day other thinkers are speeding swiftly, or slowly stumbling towards its admission, while a diminishing number still close their ears and rush away from it. We shall, in another chapter, again restate this First Principle, and add to the argument further confirmation, contending that the solution

¹ See *Christian Doctrine Harmonized*.

of the moral problems, which is our ultimate aim, must be held in abeyance until this is done.

But we have to consider yet another difficulty that springs up in our pathway. We have said that the common endeavor of those who love the truth is to induce men to *think*, to accept the conclusions of their reason, and to act rationally. But, at the start, we must take account of the fact that man has a propensity to be irrational, and even to prefer the irrational. This is as indubitable as his propensity to obey his sensuous impulse, or to follow any scheme of self-interest. It is labor to be rational. It is easy to be irrational. Even physical exertion is easy and welcome only so far as it is spontaneous,—the play of the psycho-physical impulses. So, to arrest the spontaneous currents of the brain, and think for a purpose, requires an effort. Some ideal and imagined end must be attractive enough to make one put forth such effort. Most men tire of mental work sooner than they do of physical labor. Most men, when they can, and all in a degree,—and some constantly, habitually, or deliberately,—shun the labor of thinking. Well is it that some men have *thought*;—have been fired by the spiritual passion which knows no peace till it finds the truth, or the human race would never have risen above animality, or stagnation.

This indisposition to think leaves men more or less victims to the superstition which they inherit from their animal origin. Many animals are superstitious, and so are men, so far as they are animals and mentally undeveloped. Slowly has man relieved

himself from, or modified the superstitious fear of unknown or misunderstood sights and sounds which he has in common with the horse or the dog. Any refusal to think, or inability to think, or weariness in thinking, leaves him so far a prey to the superstition which he owes to his share of the common animality. Superstition is simply the irrational. It is inherited, and only those of extremest culture, if even they, are free from it. The shadows, or faint feelings of past superstitions, which the intellect has rejected, still linger in the consciousness of us all.

Superstition implies a false philosophy. It has adopted, and for the time depends upon, an untrue view of the universe, or declines to find out the laws which govern it. This *inertia* is so natural and easy that it is no wonder that the mass of men, and all at times, are swayed by the apprehensions which are born from the false view of the world they live in. This is a great impediment in the way of any endeavor to bring them to the truth. As long as men do not rise above the monitions of feeling, or imagination, or even of the sensuous understanding, they are still more or less superstitious. If they remain content and still, and shun the labor of further thought, they are the victims of their own short-sighted understanding at the point it has reached, or the slaves of some one else's understanding. Rather than struggle after the truth and free themselves, they will remain in bondage. Rest and unmolested security for the entire mind becomes a temptation as real as that to yield to any carnal appetite in excess. Anything, therefore, which

saves the labor of thinking, or promises immunity from its task, and security and ease, is welcome to the natural man. Thus at some stage of his development does man spontaneously or wilfully decline the divine call to find the truth; or else, at some point of his endeavor, find himself exhausted. The impulse which he must now and then feel, if but feebly, which shows him to be a spirit, and congener to the Divine Spirit, is repressed, or exhausted, and he betakes himself, in most cases easily, in some cases unwillingly, to some one else's *dictum*, and welcomes or resigns himself to that which saves him the labor of further thinking. Instead of rising higher in the scale of being, he is stationary, so far as his own effort is concerned, and he must owe any further elevation to something external to his proper self. Hence the readiness with which any claim of authority is admitted, the welcome given to any specious allegation of infallibility. It puts the mind at rest to admit the papal claims, to relegate the task of thinking to a few supposed to be divinely enlightened. It puts the mind at rest, not so completely, however, to admit the infallibility of the Christian Scriptures as interpreted by some contemporary set of men. Thus is accounted for the readiness with which many welcome that view of conflicting doctrinal claims which does not disturb the present serenity, and furnishes rest and ease the soonest.

In a degree this is a universal human infirmity, and is excusable from the very limitations of our physical structure, and the consequent imperfection of our social structures. We all reach the period

when it becomes too severe a task to think without weariness or perturbation; when we have to rest content, or stop, sublimely discontented, with what we have already attained, when we must trust for the remainder of our days to the system with which we happen to be identified, and leave to others the task to take up the problems afresh. Hence it becomes, often, the severest trial of courage and of faith to be bold enough to express our doubt. It may not always be wise to express it, indeed, if the time and the conditions for its resolution have not arrived; or if it is mere unarticulated doubt with no fortifying argument behind it. In any public discussion, in our day, it is noticeable how quickly and readily the general mind puts down any tentative after new truth which may modify the existing views with which men have rested content so long. It is not eager to see whether some new and modifying truth may not be hovering in the mists and struggling after clear expression. It does not wish to be disturbed in its comfortable security and serenity. Yet it is only by this dialectic of doubt, and negation, and reaffirmation, and reconstruction, that truth has been discovered, developed, and amplified. How every modifying truth has had to fight for its right to be taken into the account! The reluctance so to take it shows fear instead of confidence in that which has hitherto seemed to satisfy. This dread of thinking is the very essence of superstition. It is content for the time being with a philosophy of the universe which is inadequate;—which assertion we now proceed more carefully to establish and explicate.

When the horse starts aside at the sight of an unfamiliar object, there is implied the dread of some hostile influence, possibly derived from some past experience, but more likely from an inherited instinct, which itself implies that in the world are forces hostile to the self-preservation of the animal. There is no ability in the mind of the animal to classify these forces,—to discover their purpose and their law. After particular and repeated experience that any one of these is not hostile,—after familiarity,—the dread of the animal passes away.

When the uncultured African, taught by his ancestors, or his neighbors, that a certain object is a source of possible mischief, what is implied? Either that there is a fountain of malignant influences, guided by some intelligence, whose outgoings it is prudent to shun, and which is in conflict with the fountain of beneficent influences, which, in the main, is the fullest in its outflowings. Thus there is implied a Dualism, *i. e.*, an irrational philosophy. There is no unity in nature's forces, hence no meaning, but a perpetual hostility, one force seeking to injure, the other to preserve and to benefit, the human being. Or else it is implied that nature's forces have meaning and relation only among themselves, and have no necessary and intelligible relation to the human being. Some of them are beneficent, and others hostile or harmful, and the human task is to use prudence in avoiding the one class and availing itself of the other. They have no other meaning for men than to teach a lesson of prudence. There is no other and higher adaptation

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to human wants and longings. For them man is only an animal, and not a spiritual soul with aspirations. There is no moral meaning to nature's movements. Their highest function is to sharpen the prudential outlook. This denial, or non-perception of any moral meaning or adaptation to the wants of a spiritual soul, this assumption that nature's forces are indifferent, and entirely aloof from man's spiritual needs; or else that some of them are malignant and unrestrained except by the prudential subject,—either this or that is the pre-supposition. And thus is implied a philosophy of the universe which cannot satisfy the reason, for by it the higher wants and aspirations, the finer part of human experience, are unaccounted for, have no correlatives, and spiritually man is alien from nature. The principle of causality is violated. There is no unity. This is the philosophy of superstition.

When man's needs and aspirations as a spiritual being are taken into the account, then a relation between him as such and nature's forces is an imperative requirement of his thought. There is no satisfaction for the mind till a unified system is reached, and nature's forces are seen to be adapted to man's higher wants and longings; in other words, to have a moral meaning. The universe is seen to exist for moral ends, and not for material ends, except so far as these are the means to those. From this emerges the doctrine of a supreme and all-embracing Providence. Faith in this is the result of all prolonged and profound thinking. In the spasms of doubt, or neglect to progress in thought,

the old and rejected philosophy that nature's forces are indifferent or malignant reasserts itself. This is due either to the principle of heredity, and is part of the *débris* of our animality, or it may come from neglect to vanquish these by our ready thinking. The primitive superstition is slowly yet successfully encroached upon by our thought, though never, perhaps, entirely extirpated. To decline any new knowledge, or to neglect to examine whether that be new knowledge which claims to be such with some degree of speciousness, leaves us still at the mercy of our present imperfect attainments. This is a most painful part of the experience of one who has a passion for the truth.

For,—the time comes for all when thinking becomes a labor, and we are compelled to be but imperfectly rational. But this does not excuse us from the duty of thinking while we can. Wilfully to decline this is a refusal to use our highest capacity and prerogative. To take refuge in the thought-attainments of another may be a necessity, but it may also be cowardice. There is a secret loss of self-respect in any such self-surrender.

In the all-embracing Providence there must be some provision made for the emergency which thus appears, something provided for those who cannot think,—nay, also some legitimation of the refuge which, sooner or later, those who can and do think are obliged to seek. There is needed some intermediate authority to which it may be wise temporarily to defer, and for some entirely to defer. It is needful, then, to discover this authority, to legitimate

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any claim of it, to define its limitations, and discuss the question whether it has universal obligation. This difficult inquiry may be made the topic of a later chapter. But it still remains true that those who *can* think, but will not think, and who discourage others from thinking, are untrue to their highest prerogative, and are so far victims to a slumbering but not extinct superstition.

The Divine Being, indeed, treats men as physical machines, and makes abundant provision for their preservation and welfare; but He treats men also as free intelligences. He reaches our physical being through physical or mechanical means, but He reaches our spiritual being through spiritual agencies. To suppose that He reaches our spiritual being through mechanical agencies degrades us into passive machines, and neglects us as free intelligences. To think that He does so is, again, an instance of superstition. The old philosophy is brought back. To believe that He reaches us through mystical agencies brought to bear directly upon our spiritual being is what we cannot readily decline, if we regard man as a true universal, reflecting in himself the unknown as well as the known of the universe. But such mystical agency must act upon us as spiritual, upon that which is highest in us,—upon us as rational beings. The will is approached through the reason, and not by any physical intermediate. The aim is to illumine and amplify the truth and make it attractive. This again brings to us the obligation to use our reason,—to think. And the summit of thought-attainment

is that the Ruler of the Universe is an all-loving and all-wise Providence. In proportion as this is grasped does all superstitious fear vanish. The disappearance of such fear is proof of the triumph of faith. This sublime attainment of the human being may be retarded and repressed, but the movement towards it cannot be extinguished. Beneath it is the double faith that the individual man is immortal and has a destiny; and that the destiny is for him as member of an organism, and hence includes the well-being of his fellows, and the attainment of the ultimate commonwealth of love, with the physical and mental perfection therefrom resultant.

We are now in the middle of a pathway that has left much behind us, but stretches out before us with the end thereof still in the mists. Yet we are encouraged by the hope that ultimately the whole human race, upon the planet, and beyond it or around it, will have the purified vision and attain the truth. It is but a *hope*, indeed; and if we subside from that, we may rest in the lesser hope that the time will come, still, on the planet, or beyond it, when truth will be accepted simply because it is rational; and will be rejected, if rejected, not because it is thought to be irrational, but because a portion of the race will, in reality or semblance, prefer the irrational, and endeavor to maintain themselves in this isolation. Whether such spiritual suicide is possible for human souls is a distinct question; and the clear solution of it will not be made till the human cycle has revolved to its completion.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN MORALITY ALONE ABSOLUTE

WE have to make good our assertion that only from the admission into the will of the motive-spring of responsive love can issue a morality which is rational and not beset by contradictions.

There are but three possible aims, or final causes, for any moral scheme. First, that of the Hedonist, or Utilitarian, viz.: to bring about the completest and most undisturbed enjoyment of the individual that is possible, or the largest possible aggregate of the same for the human race under the limitations of our present earthly environment. Second, the aim of an abstract and intuitional moral scheme, viz.: so to rule the will as to secure the assent of the abstract reason, disregarding other motive-springs, and looking no farther into results, since ultimate results are beyond our knowledge. If in this scheme is included in its aim the perfection of the individual subject in love, *i. e.*, in its purity and unassailable strength,—even this, unless the vision is extended into the ultimate results, and function is thus given to the imagination and the æsthetic emotion, can have no absolute worth, and the reason

is still secretly unsatisfied. For if this subjective condition exists only in a few, amid the general or partial indifference, its highest result, beyond the subject himself, is only to call forth the admiration of a few others, contemporaries, or of some far-off generation which can only contemplate it abstractly. Admiration can only go out upon a concrete. If the individual man has no permanent existence in himself, but only as a link in a causal chain, and is only the spasmodic and vanishing illustration of an idea, admiration can reach nothing objective. The stimulus is not sufficient to induce many to pursue an end so abstract. Moreover, the satisfied self-consciousness of the individual over his own altruism and disinterestedness will be crushed or saddened by the dismal failure of the multitudes around him, and by the knowledge of the wasted lives of the multitudes in the past.

The third of these moral schemes obliges one to regard man in the entirety of his possible existence; to think that unless he is immortal moral distinctions have no absolute worth and meaning. Then the testimony of consciousness that he is responsible finds legitimation. Hence the aim of this scheme is some result for man, so regarded, that will satisfy the reason and the æsthetic emotion, viz.: the existence of a commonwealth of loving souls, which will reflect the divine love in its unchangeableness, and freedom from risk or dereliction; wherein each shall fuse himself in the being of the aggregate, and find his own being enriched and amplified thereby; and where the environment

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shall offer no impediment, but be fluent and subservient to any subjective caprice. The central and indispensable postulate, and the cohering bond of this scheme is the conviction, inwrought into human consciousness,—the one permanent amid all change, that which admits of no denial, and whose every seeming denial implies it,—of a Personal Ruler of the universe, from whom springs all influences from without, which influence is always such as intelligence can apprehend, and which, therefore, must have an intelligent source. This moral scheme requires that this Personal Ruler shall be thought as loving, since He only possesses the omnipotence required to adjust the environment to the progressive needs and aspirations of the responsive soul, to furnish the field for its perpetual activity and expansion.

We find in our own day endeavors to simmer down the Christian religion into a mere morality without doctrinal postulates. They patronize it so far as to take the Sermon on the Mount, with some emendations, and regard this as the whole of the religion that is of any permanent worth. There is no need, the advocates say, of any doctrine. That is a mere narrowing fetter to the intellect. What the world needs is an improved moral condition, and not to have its metaphysical conceptions rectified, or to have any at all. Such a moral scheme as this is, in our day, often thrust forward as though it were something new. Every fresh attempt to attract notice to it differs from those that have preceded it only as modified by the existing social

condition, or as it is couched in more picturesque language, or is taught in some fictitious story. It has an air of plausibility that captivates many. In an age when faith in Christian doctrine has been seemingly weakened (we say "seemingly," but the true explanation is that it has but retired within itself to undergo trial, to test itself, and acquire strength by its victory over doubt), and when an improved social condition seems the most urgent present need of the human race, the bewildered minds of many are caught by this specious claim. It seems to meet the immediate need, and they do not reflect upon what lies back of it. The apparent failure of the existing doctrinal schemes to accomplish the moral condition that men desire leads many to turn away from them and listen to this old utterance in a new voice. As I said, they do not reflect upon what are its presuppositions. They do not see that they must have some philosophy to justify and make rational, or even expedient, these very moral aims and requirements. The thoughtful advocates of this scheme would not, perhaps, deny this necessity, when called to their attention, and they would have their own replies. They would give us the philosophy of Naturalism, or Agnosticism (which we need not stop to define), claiming that it is the result of the excogitation of their reason, and the ultimate attainment of thought. But it is contended against them that the doctrinal utterances of Christianity are themselves the results of deeper thought, and may be excogitated from the reason, even though we confess our indebtedness to

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a special divine stimulus, which we may call *inspiration*, and which was needful in order that the excogitated philosophy should reach the common and unreflecting mind. And thus it becomes a contest between rival philosophies as to which is rational. And it must be contended that that philosophy may claim the victory which remains true to the principle of causality, which rules all our mental movements, and gives us a First Principle adequate to account most completely for all existence and all change, and to explain their significance. Any philosophy other than the Christian leaves the larger number of facts, and the highest and most important of all facts, entirely unexplained; while the Christian philosophy has but its one unexplained enigma, and can show good reason why its explanation is wisely withheld, and is relegated to the future. Because of this one unexplained *fact*, viz. : the existence of moral evil, the admission of this philosophy must still be called *faith*. Yet the other philosophy also makes a demand upon *faith*, and a still larger one. When the problem is probed to the bottom, on the last step where there is any light, the difference we see between men, in adopting the one philosophy or the other, seems to depend upon the rival attractiveness of the ultimates—either the æsthetic attractiveness for the imagination of a state of things wherein the individual will regard and value himself as a member of an organism—or the attractiveness of the consciousness of his own spiritual independency. This is the question which, in theological language, has been termed, “the mystery

of our eternal election." This last ground itself, some have argued, is only a link in a chain of Determinism. This is the strong position of what is called "Calvinism." And the argument for it is met by showing that the logical process which includes it leads round to a contradiction of the premisses from which the whole scheme was deduced. All æsthetic satisfaction vanishes before any doctrine of necessity whatever. It is deadening also to any universal moral effort, and often plunges the human suffering one into a pessimistic despair.

Thus it appears that those who have turned away from Christian dogma have only rushed into another dogma, which may prove to be utterly unsafe. For many of those who would emasculate Christianity of all but its morality do not see that they have thereby deprived the morality of its vital principle, and reduced it to a mere catena of prudential rules, which can have no permanent significance, and for which we can assert no obligation. Christianity, as well as any such moral scheme, admits the indispensability of a morality which shall satisfy human needs. To say that by its adherents the acceptance of some dogmatic system is taken as a substitute for, or even a complement to, a perfect morality, is a misunderstanding, or a perversion, or a caricature of this religion. By no means can it be denied, however, that Christianity has been so corrupted, so falsely viewed. As every man must start afresh in the life of thought, and is often unacquainted with the thought-history of the past, this ignorance or oversight is to be found in our own day, and it is this

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which furnishes occasion for the adversaries of Christianity to flout its doctrines. And we see also that to hold to some particular statement of doctrine in its totality is regarded by some as more important for the world's welfare than correct moral conduct,—that it is often taken as a substitute for the latter, or as a makeweight for its deficiency. But it is not to be forgotten that this clinging to a scheme of doctrine may have a moral motive, and hence that individual reproof or condemnation is by no means indicated, and is generally unsafe and often wrong.

A perfect morality—a loving commonwealth—is the aim of Christianity itself, and all doctrine or dogma is but a means thereto. The function of the latter is to furnish ground for the adoption of its unique motive-spring.

An abstract moral scheme may make love its cardinal and unifying principle, and so far it will be true. But what it may lack is the truth that such love should be responsive; that to be securely valid it must issue because the Creator's love has first been shown; that thus it becomes a personal relation. Should such scheme contain or avow this in any form, it is so far identical with Christianity, and to land securely in this last is but a further step. No moral effort can have perennial vigor, and move forward without discouragement, which is not founded upon the faith that the Ruler of the universe, in whom all power is lodged, is also loving; and that hence He will adjust the environment to the subjective needs and aspirations of those who are moving towards the ideal moral perfection. All

morality which does not spring from this faith has not a motive-spring which is adequately strong. It will have its phases of discouragement, will easily abate of its enthusiasm, be less fortified against doubt, and succumb more readily to seducing schemes of unbelief.

An argument *a priori*, or on philosophic grounds, may, indeed, and for some must be formulated to show that the First Principle of the universe is essential love; which argument will have its own difficulties, and can never escape the need of *faith* still. Still this argument cannot readily be brought to bear upon the mass of unthinking humanity. But a concrete illustration and evidence of the same, addressed to sense, understanding, and imagination, the very region whence all doubts do come, wherein an historical occurrence is made to blend with and illustrate the idea, may be brought to bear upon the simplest mental capacity. The *a priori* method shows us the actual and necessary self-limitation of the Godhead, wherefrom may come the Divine entrance into humanity through Incarnation. This idea is illustrated by the *a posteriori* method, which gives us the historical Christ, and his utterances and his claims. This history shows, too, what the *a priori* method does not, viz.: of what development and exaltation humanity is capable; all this to man's vast encouragement and enthusiasm. In the human triumph over all sin and its consequences, as exhibited in the atoning sacrifice and the resurrection, are displayed the divine love and the perfect human love as

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meeting and coalescing, as becoming identical (and coalescence in love, the central attribute of divinity, carries with it coalescence in *nature*); and thus that the Final Cause of the created universe is ideally illustrated and potentially reached.

It follows, then, that no morality which does not spring from responsive love is *rational*, *i. e.*, has been reduced to a minimum of possible contradiction. No *stadium* gained by it can bring other than a restless and transitory satisfaction to thought. The disciple of any such scheme can either not go beyond a complacent regard of his own mental achievement in attaining what seems the truth; or, for another, the function of imagination will be limited to the contemplation of the maximum of enjoyment possible for the human race under the present environment. Neither emotion is stimulating. In the one case it is cold, in the other not warm enough to kindle a permanent enthusiasm, to make the human soul blaze and aspire as the actual flames. The immediate result of any such activity may have a *quasi* rightness, but the ultimate objective result is shrouded in darkness. Instead of a commonwealth of loving souls, drawn up into the Divine heart, its vision stops at a multitude individually self-satisfied, or else alternately hopeful, or fearing, or despairing.

But one may ask, is the faith of Christian people in this, their moral purpose, strong and steady? Do they not sometimes doubt? Yes, they do. But they do not, because they *cannot*, doubt the superior rationality of this their scheme. To abandon

it is necessarily to fall back upon something less rational, and therefore indulged in but a little and almost involuntarily and then abandoned. The Christian *never* doubts the existence and the wisdom of God. To regard the universe as the product of an unintelligent force is for him the climax of absurdity. He may momentarily doubt the free *power* of God, and consider whether He is not limited by something exterior to Himself. But this is a Dualism that is an uneasy refuge, and is soon rejected. His troubling doubts concern only the *character* of God, of which he is forced to judge according to the modes of human character. He may doubt the unmixed goodness of God, and see that that cannot be maintained, or ever reconciled with the condition of the actual universe. God is in some way self-limited, or else is mere arbitrariness and has no permanent character that can be trusted. This notion may sometimes intrude, and He be thought to be indifferent to animal pain and human suffering. The mystery of Providence is so perplexing, for the most part so unreadable; it looks often to the superficial view that the Divine being has no care for multitudes of His creatures, or sympathy with their wants and longings; sin and crime are so abundant even in the Christian nations; so few of mankind rise above their animality; the Christians so poorly illustrate their own pure belief; they quarrel with each other, and make wide their divergence, instead of falling back upon the fellowship which their common faith should create, and seeking some common ground wherefrom to think in order to

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settle their differences, and harmonize their thought and activity;—from such and other similar reflections doubts do come, yet the question, in ordinary Christian meditation is always reduced to the one:—Can it be maintained and persistently held that the Creator of the universe is all-loving as well as all-wise and all-powerful? This can never be reduced to a demonstration, and it becomes a balance of probabilities. Unthinking Christians may not, but those who think do, feel the assault upon their faith more or less poignantly and persistently. Yet this very trial, forcing their faith back upon the conclusions reached by their pure reason, has the effect to add *virtue* to their faith, which is thus the strongest when it triumphs over its own temporary weakness.

That faith is not of most worth, is not the most admirable, which never doubts, which never is assaulted, which adheres habitually to the tradition by which it has been taught, or blindly yields itself to the alleged superior insight of another; but such faith, as, in spite of all assaults and doubts, clings to the monitions of the reason,—unperturbed by feeling, of the truth of which it has an intuition derived from the predispositions of human nature, and before which ever hovers an obscure ideal of perfection,—and grows stronger for its passionate adherence. What is required, in the Divine plan for the human soul, is not only that it should be a pure soul, but also a strong spirit, whose fibre has become so firm by resistance that it becomes at length incapable of assault or deflection, and can

be trusted to take its place in a regenerated universe.

For the Christian, then, who has yielded to the sublime attraction, and given heart for heart, no one of these doubts, normally, overcomes the conviction that love is the cardinal principle of morality—its imperishable element—or the faith that the Creator of the world can be no lower than His creatures, and must be in Himself *love*, in its true idea. The principle of causality is still supreme in our thinking; and that man loves shows that God loves. The sum of Christianity, the *primum* from which all its doctrine and conduct start, is expressed in the words, "We love Him because He first loved us."

When we examine those endeavors to substitute and defend an abstract morality, or any morality which excludes all doctrinal presuppositions which can be said to be religious, it looks as though their authors or defenders had never read or pondered the above words. The improvement or exaltation of the human race which they hope to bring about is accompanied by the degradation, in their thought, of the idea of the Ruler of the universe; and if He, the source of all power, is less than we are, in this, the finest of all our capacities, all religion is necessarily extinguished. There is nothing to adore. There is nothing higher than man, and the culmination of the developing process thus far is this human race, which still brings forth for every generation a plentiful crop of selfishness and crime and suffering and wretchedness. Here lies the Pessimistic gulf. That man, after all, does not

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believe this to be the meaning of the universe is the only reason why multitudes more do not conclude that life is not worth having, and that suicides are not multiplied a hundredfold.

But the finer capacities of man cannot be crushed. He longs still, at times, for something to worship, something that can equal his own idea of excellence, some object free from his own weakness, and whom he can trust. He sees still and welcomes the symbols, which nature provides, of a beneficent power beneath it; that everywhere enjoyment breaks forth; and the suggestion is deathless that He who made them delights in the delight of His creatures. The birds pour out their complacent or exultant strains, the beasts gambol in graceful motions, the fishes sport in the ocean, and yield their lives without a cry, possibly without suffering. The flowers glow and sparkle, and the leaves shine and tremble, with a seeming content and joy. The sky puts forth its glories in august majesty, and colors its own depth in infinite gradation. Beauty is everywhere,—perfection of organic existence, freedom in all graceful motion, in all exquisite harmonies of color. The joy that we feel in the contemplation of all this shows that joy governed its birth, and flows along with its development. The sublime cataclysms of nature subside into some new and higher beauty. Life, apart from human sin, is beautiful. Existence, which has such possibilities, seems still worth having, could only the fear be crushed that all this is transient, and the hope be kindled that its imperfections will disappear, its capacities be

amplified, and its blessedness be carried along, as heretofore, in an endless progression.

And music, too, allures us with its strange melodies and harmonies, its stimulus to reminiscence, its prophecies of a state of things which will satisfy. Can the most wondrous of human delights be the most evanescent? That which so expands the soul, or sends it searching into its own depths, shows that the soul is capable of a larger life.

When the human brain is undiseased, and does not disorder the mental vision, and thus almost destroy responsibility, these health-giving monitions of nature keep alive our faith, and men are religious often without knowing it.

Then, too, if it is the fact that pure and utter self-sacrifice, when seen unmistakably to be such, in a human brother excites human admiration and enthusiasm as nothing else does or can, brings out the nobler, and by contagion similar, impulses of human nature, and extinguishes man's selfishness for a time,—it would seem that an illustration of sacrifice on God's part ought to be convincing, ought to arouse man's confident hope and utmost enthusiasm, and would multiply itself by contagion in those who recognize it. In other religions than the Christian we find human self-sacrifice, sometimes from some impure motive, as, to excite admiration, or from mere caprice; yet sometimes, we are willing to think, from a pure motive; in which the mental consciousness is that the general good is of more worth, for the ultimate upshot of things, than the individual good, and a more transporting

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end for contemplation. But in Christianity alone is this secret consciousness brought into clear expression, and justified, since it gives an approval of sacrifice, a visible instance of the Divine self-limitation, which can have no other origin than the divine love. Could this divine sacrifice be reproduced and fully responded to in the human one, it ought to show itself in the human one as omnipotent; and thus, what we should *a priori* expect we find in fact in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the gift and the avowal of Omnipotence.

CHAPTER XIX

"A PRIORI" ARGUMENT FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL POSTULATE OF CHRISTIANITY

I HAVE said that an *a priori* argument that the Ruler of the universe is loving may be constructed,—as follows:

The principle of causality rules all our mental movements. There is an imperious demand in and for the intellect that all existence and all change shall be thought of in the light shed by its antecedents. Nothing is isolated. Whatever *is* is by virtue of what went before, logically and chronologically. The vision flies backward, and rests not till it finds an adequate origin. This, the primal and efficient Cause, must account for whatever was, is, and is to be in the physical universe, in human consciousness, and in human history. Following the progressive movement, displayed in time, it can only be interpreted in the light of some Final Cause, some end to which all is tending, some idea to be realized. Without this there is no meaning to whatever goes before.

The Primal Cause must be adequate to this Final Cause. It cannot be less in meaning and amplitude

than man's idea of it. The limitation which man finds in his thought convinces him that this Cause exceeds or transcends his thought. That idea of the First Principle, therefore, is likely to be the truest which is the most ample. Something exists. To our apprehension existence shows in several grades, and in a seeming hierarchy of ideas and forces. The highest possible unifying idea of the whole can only approximate in truth the veritable reality, yet must be truer than any idea less profound and ample. This is the ontological argument.

It is evident that the First Principle of the universe has transcended Himself, *i. e.*, has posited something external to Himself yet tied to Himself by fixed laws. So far it is the same. Regarding it as only the same is called "Pantheism." But it is also something other, and independent. He has limited Himself by bringing into being intelligent spirits, which reflect and share to some extent His own intelligence, and whose substantial being is rooted in the common ground of nature, yet who can form subjective ends, irrespective of His end, and deflect nature's forces accordingly. He has limited Himself in lower degree by the existence of all *life* whatever, but this limitation need only be thought as provisional. We see that by virtue of this limitation the created work progresses through stages of evolution towards some ultimate stage. And this movement is uninterrupted, even though the consequences of the deflection and contradiction which His free spiritual creatures make to His normal end and purpose have to be annulled, and their

material content be made to flow into the outward stream of His providence. Thus the universe is still preserved in its integrity. No meaning, attached to the ultimate stage whither all movement is tending, which falls below the highest meaning possible for thought and imagination is satisfactory to our thought. This is a corollary of the ontological argument. And this highest possible meaning is—the production of a commonwealth of loving and intelligent souls, which shall resemble Himself in all resemblance possible for a creature.

Man, knowing himself to be a spiritual being, *i. e.*, one who can frame ideal ends, individualistic or universalistic, and can energize to realize them,—than which no function of thought or will is conceivably higher,—is obliged to think the First Principle his congener in this respect, whatever else he may be. That man's own thought recognizes and coalesces with the thought displayed in the universe shows that, notwithstanding all disclaimers, he has synthesized the universe, and given it rationality. And as, in himself, all thought and action are accompanied by, or enveloped, in feeling or emotion, complacency or its opposite (an element in self-consciousness that cannot be abstracted, and which shows itself plainly in the very attempt at abstraction)—this, too, must have its origin in the First Principle, and therefore such emotion, delight, or complacency, cannot be severed in imagination, or in thought itself, from the intelligent activity displayed in the universe. Did the Creator have no delight in His own activity, He were less than man.

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Man's appreciation of the beautiful shows that he has found in nature the congener to his own physical freedom, actual, and also desirable, and, it may be, possible. Free motion in imagination finds its symbols in nature's gradations and actual motions. All recognition and delight in the beautiful is a first step in a creative process, and is a hint that a second step may hereafter be taken.

Thus man finds spirituality in the universe. Spirituality can for him be not otherwise manifested than as personality. They are so far equivalents, though the latter term may not exhaust the significance of the former. Since man's own personality, as a concrete, enlarges its definition in consequence of moral and social conditions and possibilities, it is enlarged a step further in the endeavor to find coalescence, and the attainment of conscious coalescence with the Spirit of the universe. Hence the personal relation with this Spirit is possible, and may be attained through *media* progressively advancing in simplicity, purity, and immediateness. Close, interpenetrating fellowship with his kind is man's high spiritual and satisfying attainment; and the possible close fellowship with the Divine Person is the utmost of his aspiration.

That man is thus brought in contact with the Divine Spirit in a progressive intimacy, is a fact analogous to and as indubitable as that he is brought into spiritual contact with his fellows through *media* of advancing refinement. There is more of knowledge in our recognition of a human brother than there is in the recognition of nature and her forces,

except as we unify these, and regard them as the outcome of the Divine Spirit. Man may be deceived and have his knowledge corrected concerning the existence and the motions of the physical universe; but he is not, and cannot be, deceived in his apprehension of the thought and energy which determine them all. He is surer of the existence of other spiritual souls than his own than he is of all other seeming facts which are never perfectly understood. And he is still surer of the existence of the Divine Spirit as the Author of himself and other like souls. This is the one thing which he cannot deny, or resolve into anything simpler. The transient has no meaning except as contrasted with the permanent; the imperfect no significance except as contrasted with the perfect; the finite is no thought at all except as implying the infinite. Men really recognize this truth even in their attempts at denial, for the recognized limitation of their thought-capacity, whence springs the denial, is an affirmation of that which limits it.

When driven to his last refuge in any peril to his physical being, or in any dark perplexity in his mental experience, man's instinctive resort is to the Eternal Spirit. He prays in spite of his resolve not to pray. He longs for deliverance or light, thereby implying that the Spirit of the universe might so modify physical motions, or brain currents, as to bring liberation or light. There is, in this spontaneous longing, the faith, or at least the hope (and hope is but the first stage of faith), that the Spirit of the universe is beneficent, and could, whether he

will or not, yield to this longing and grant what is prayed for. Observation shows that the prayer is not always, or even usually, answered as the suppliant hoped it might be; that the particular boon which he longs for must yield to the requirements of the universal well-being, and that his relief can only permanently come from the relief of the totality. But if nothing more is gained, this suppliant has by his prayer brought himself into personal relation with the Spirit of the universe, and thus has moved a hair's-breadth nearer to the ultimate harmony.¹ He is richer and larger thereby, as he is richer and larger by being brought into personal relation with his fellow-men; whereby it is shown that the moral relation, which is one between persons only, is the means for his advance and enrichment. Thus the religious relation is a finer bond still and more compensating.

Observation shows, too, that man's individual well-being and earthly enjoyment are part of the plan of the universal Spirit, when not interfered with, or modified by the requirements of the well-being of the totality; from which limitation it comes to pass that the immediate well-being and enjoyment of some must be sacrificed for the welfare of others; and thus is shown that all defect and positive inflection are vicarious. Thus the inference comes to be drawn that the true unit in the Divine regard is not, primarily, the individual as such, but the entire human family; rather, indeed, the entire

¹ See the chapter on "Christian Prayer" in *Christian Doctrine Harmonised*.

organism of all spiritual existence in space and time. Morality is based upon this very assumption that the true perfection of the individual can come only from the perfection of the totality. But that the well-being of the individual proceeds when not interfered with by the needs of the totality, strengthens the faith, with which man prays, that the Ruler of the universe is beneficent, and that all want and pain required by the universal purpose are transient and provisional. More or less clearly, inchoately, or consciously, men reach the conviction, thus derived, that the central and moving characteristic of the Ruler of the universe is benevolence, often falling short of beneficence; thus that it is, manifestly, not pure goodness, but something other, and it may be *Love*,—which is distinguished from pure goodness as containing the element of severity as well as of tenderness,—therefore that what seems the opposite of goodness in the treatment of men is but love impatient with its own contradiction, and taking the form of Justice.

No principle taken to account for all fact and knowledge will explain them as well as does this one. The profoundest thinkers which our race has produced have reached this solution, and expressed it in some form or other.

Probably it will be found, on a clear and close analysis of determining motives, that men are disposed to accept Christianity rightly understood according as they accept the thought as true, and the feeling as warranted, that Love is the impetus, and responsive love the final cause of all physical

movement, and of all social and moral change and advance. For, when men deny this, or have a diminishing faith in it,—then, though haunted still by the conviction, or the fear that they have fallen short of the true end of their being,—then, pure selfishness, or earthly expediency, must become the guide and rule of life: though some may endeavor after a *via media*, and through sympathy allow themselves to hope for the improvement and more satisfying aspect of some future generation. And this latter class shows hereby the rationality of the scheme of thought which they have declined; for this very sympathy which produces contentment with present sacrifice shows that general well-being alone can satisfy human thought and feeling, can alone lay the reason to rest, and furnish food for all æsthetic requirements. But for the larger number, and for all at times, the result of this rejection is that they make a wilful stoppage of all thought, or fall into the pit of pessimistic despair.

There is a seeming logical ground for this pessimism, which we must by no means ignore. Were all the enjoyment of the general human race put, figuratively, in one scale, and the undeserved and meaningless agony of a single soul in the other, the latter would outweigh the former in our mental regard. It would be an enormous contradiction, and the irresolvable proof that what ought not to be *is*; that the irrational, or contradictory, has substantial ground. Even though we change the phraseology, and say “deserved,” instead of “undeserved,” this only throws the problem still farther back into the

darkness. The only step that can be taken towards a solution is to hold, that the Creator of the universe, in limiting Himself by the creation of a spiritual soul that should be morally free, did it at this risk, —at the risk of a contradiction; which contradiction has become actual. That the actual contradiction was beyond the sphere of the divine knowledge, as some deep thinkers have held,¹ cannot be maintained without lowering our idea of a Perfect Being, who thus does not know the content and implications of His own idea. But there is no avoidance of the tremendous weight of this contradiction. The Omnipotent one is met by a host of spiritually independent gods, whose potency, indeed, He can reduce to nonentity, but whose moral attitude He cannot overcome. To suppose that He will annihilate them, *i. e.*, destroy their self-consciousness, is but an impatient resort from a mental difficulty,—is no true solution, since it destroys the absolute character of moral distinctions, and reduces man to a mere ethic of expediency. Here would be absolute waste,—the one startling exception to all analogy, which nowhere shows *waste*.

If, however, we adhere to the naïve conviction that the actual transgression must be fully within the sphere of the divine knowledge, we may notice that this moral evil, now existing, may and does become a mean to the end which love has set for itself, and furnishes a way whereby the created spirit can become strong, by its persistent struggle and resistance in a sphere of temptation. Precisely in

¹ *E. g.*, the late Rowland G. Hazard.

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what way the acknowledged existence of moral evil must affect our conception of the Divine *character* remains a problem which hitherto has found no solution. Our light is flecked by shadows still. It may, however, be shown,—and thus we may reach some reconciliation,—that the solution of this enigma would be no boon to humanity, at the present stage of its development, since it would lighten the task, and narrow the sphere of *faith*; for in our human experience we know of no other way in which the spiritual soul can become strong except by the exercise of faith. Simply because we fail to reach mental clarification here seems no sufficient reason why we should abandon hope for despair. Yet, sad to say, many do, and turn their faces from the beauty which draws them in the opposite direction, with its manifold hopeful suggestions.

How much the choice of one or the other of these alternatives depends upon physical conditions, upon brain conditions, is a problem for science to take up. And the result will be to modify our view of human responsibility and make us hesitate to form rash and positive judgments. Possibly in this direction lies the partial solution of the enigma.

If we turn away from this pit of darkness, into which an illuminating ray scarcely strays, and look towards the light, though that be still flecked with shadows, then hope revives and consolations spring up in abundance. Taking love to be the central characteristic of the Ruler of the universe, we find it not difficult to interpret the most of His doings according to the terms of love. We are reconciled

to the suffering of the undeserving, believing it to be but transient, and that the well-being of the totality requires it. We find, gratefully, proof of love in all the bountiful provision for human enjoyment. The painfulness of our sympathy with suffering shows that we have still a profound conviction that suffering is abnormal, and that existence without it is possible. A vision of a more satisfying condition hovers over us, and urges us to diminish all suffering meanwhile. It is so much gain to the recuperative principle, to diminish suffering, whether bodily or mental. It alone is a step, however short or feeble, towards a perfect state of existence. This draws us in imagination towards it, and the ideal picture, alone consoling, is one in which we see bountiful provision made for activity and enjoyment, in which all human ones who will shall have a share. Whether there are any, or even one, who is not allured by this vision of a loving commonwealth under a loving and bountiful Ruler, whose resources are exhaustless, is a question quite distinct, and hitherto untouched. Sometimes it seems to be impossible that any can resist this attraction, and certain, almost, that all would feel it when the delusive films are taken from their eyes. But if any can, and do, then pure evil is possible, and seems to be eternal, since the spiritual soul is, from its very definition, indestructible. This possibility furnishes for our scheme of thought the only doubt that is formidable, and which is sometimes deadening. It is the most fearful possible trial to faith to resist it. It seems to leave a permanent contradiction, and

throws doubt upon the omniscience and omnipotence of Love. Let us not weaken the force of this doubt, or the terror of this dilemma. We cannot solve it. We can only cling passionately to the Supreme Love, knowing it to be higher and purer than our own love, and wait for the illumining light. Let us not rashly think that the alternative solutions present to us are the only possible ones. We, for our hope's sake, will make the most that we can of the proofs and illustrations of the divine love. These we may find abundantly, showing themselves in a progressive series, showing step by step, more and more of the divine character. Thus we are not surprised, but only expectant, when at length the Ruler of the universe displays the utmost reach of love, and thus wins mankind to Himself by the most powerful attraction: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to Me."

The Ruler of the universe is not made loving by any love shown first by the creature. This, again, would be to exalt the human above the divine. All experience shows that man sets for himself no higher and no other idea for attainment than he thinks the Ruler of the universe to be. Just so much love as He displays will the creature respond to. Hence the utmost possible love of the Divine One must first be shown to elicit the utmost possible love of his creature. Unless, then, rational beings, as men, are eternal and necessary, as is the creative Spirit, the love of the Divine Spirit must have existed before creation. It must be prior in thought, and all creative progress and change must

be interpreted by the Final Cause which love must have set for itself, viz. : the reciprocal love of intelligences capable of love, and the resultant harmony therefrom.

Pure Monotheism, in whatever form existing, is reached at a certain stadium in the thought process, below which there is a deeper one. If any such Monotheism admits love as an essential quality of the Divinity, it becomes involved in a dilemma which shows its inadequacy. For since love, as such, requires an object, or objects, which can love in return, there is, in this scheme, no such thing as an eternal, necessary, and sufficient object,—nothing to give the perfect response, but only a perpetual tentative after such. The scheme requires, to be self-consistent, that there shall be no such thing as a beginning. Love cannot be predicated for an object which is *in vacuo*, or only possible. Creation must therefore be perennial and eternal, a perpetual and necessary raying out from a central sun. All continued production of free intelligences is simply development, the variant fruitage of the necessary fructification. This scheme, of course, contains within itself the possibility of moral evil. These free intelligences, be it remembered, exist of necessity, and may refuse to reciprocate without self-reproach. For there can be no valid claim of allegiance from objects who are also subjects, towards the Supreme Subject who asks to be also an object. The sole difference between one and the others is in the degree of power, in the one case unlimited, in the others variously limited, and possibly

reducible to nonentity. However supreme such divinity may be in power over the environment and the *media* of intercourse, He is not supreme in the created spirit, for the will of a rational being is unassailable, or, rather, unconquerable. Any obedience then from such would be slavish, the obedience of fear, unless some evidence were shown of the love of Him who controlled the environment. Besides, if the desire and design of the hypothecated Supreme One is reciprocal love, it is doomed to disappointment, and meets with perfect return from none. Thus this divinity must be figured as in perpetual unrest.

We may note, also, as inconsistent with such scheme, that all observation, all science, points to a beginning of the universe *of our knowledge*. That which has a beginning and an end indicates design, and so far the argument from design is impregnable. We are carried back by science to the necessary hypothesis of the absolutely simple, the characterless substrate (not hyle), upon which determination has been wrought, and which only becomes matter for knowledge when thus synthesized by spirit. Thus there is suggested a cyclical movement, and that periodically the universe is resolved into its simple and undetermined substrate, and begins a new career of development, to be again resolved into the absolutely simple. There is no contradiction *a priori* to holding as true such cyclical movement; but so far as the end of reciprocal love is concerned, it becomes a succession of failures, urging towards a problematical success. The omnipotence

of the divinity is thus assaulted, or else He is figured as a mere arbitrary will, and the characteristic of love disappears.

Christianity saves us, measurably, from these dilemmas of pure Monotheism by holding as true and rational, or revealed, *i. e.*, suggested to human reason, that love is a part of the definition of the First Principle, that it is found *immanent* in the Godhead itself, and, therefore alone, can become transcendent. The Scylla of an eternal, necessary, and disappointing creation, and the Charybdis of a mere arbitrary and characterless will, are thus avoided. Within the Godhead are subjects who are also objects, and reciprocity eternally exists between absolutely perfect subjects. Since love then eternally exists, and is thus metaphysically necessary, it may, as love, freely transcend the eternal bound. This freedom is moral necessity, and these are equivalents. This love has its own compulsion, and the compulsion consists in the attractiveness of the ideal end. A love which is perfect asks for a perfect response. This it has had. A love which is boundless asks for boundless response. To reach this is the design of the created universe. It has had the first, and thereby has rendered possible the other.

This doctrine is not Tritheism. Rather it is the only one of which any unity can be predicated. The absolutely simple unit escapes all imagination, and for thought is the uttermost abstract,—pure being, or naught. Either the Unity in Trinity is the Absolute, and the key to all knowledge, or else

creation is eternal, because absolutely necessary to avoid this void of pure being in which everything melts away and disappears. The very created result,—that which exists, and we cannot deny, without refusing all knowledge,—requires, to think it, energy guided by an impelling motive and displaying thought. Will or activity is only possible from the presupposition of this threefold antecedent. The Eternal Fount of being,—the something which has to be assumed, becomes matter for human thought—only when it breaks into the distinction of subject and object. A relation between these is unavoidable in our thought, and they become elements of a concrete—Father and Son. Their mutual recognition is constitutive, and accomplishes for our thought, the absolute concrete. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit means simply that the mutual recognition of Father and Son is an eternal *act*; and thus alone does other *act* become possible. Not till all this is thought can the energy impelled by love and displaying thought, which we see in the actual universe, become, in our thought, possible. Now, all is supplied that is needful to account for all existence, all characteristics and all development and change. Being, Thought, and Energy *are*, and Love is the name of their unifying bond. Not till this is thought can *Will* be thought. From this Will proceeds the universe, and all created work exhibits the threefoldness which are the constituents of Will. We find in it Being, which becomes Existence by being determined. This determination is Thought—has meaning. We find also Activity, or

movement, which develops the undetermined according to Thought. Take away any one of these constituents, and *Will* disappears, melts into the mere abstract.

Since Love from its very definition is active, it must transcend the eternal bound; yet, to be rightly thought, this transcendence must be regarded as *free, i. e.*, not determined by anything actual beyond itself. It is self-determined,—determined by what is possible and not by what is actual. There is no other freedom possible than this. It is not forbidden, then, to hold that this transcendent activity has been eternal, provided that the motive for creation,—to make the possible actual,—is seen to be *prior* in thought. *This* cannot be contradicted or rendered nugatory by *that*. We must not reverse the order of thought. The imperfect love of the creature does not show the perfect love of the Creator. The perfect love of the Creator must first be shown as bringing about the perfect love of the creature. Each thus accomplishes and illustrates its correlative. The created thus is assimilated to the uncreated. This is the highest possible reach of human thought and aspiration.

The contention between these two schemes of thought, which, in the author's view, are the only ones having any plausibility, cannot be ended by demonstration. Hence to hold the one rather than the other is still a matter of *faith*. In the one scheme there is, indeed, one difficulty, or seeming contradiction, yet but *one*. The fact seems indubitable that the creature may decline to fulfil the

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intent of the Creator; and has, indeed, transiently or permanently rebelled, thus requiring on the part of the Creator an adjustment of the environment to annul the destructive or obstructive consequences of the rebellion. This seems to show that the highest aim of creative work could only be at this risk, whence the possibility and actuality of moral evil.

In the other scheme difficulties and contradictions are numerous. The created ones either wilfully decline to meet the Creator's expectations, or do it so imperfectly that no evidence appears that the perfect response is possible. Unless the response passes beyond the danger of retrogression, the Creator never reaches satisfaction, and is forever trying new experiments. If the failure is universal, there has been so much *waste*. If prolonged existence for these spiritual souls is predicated, if they do not advance they must retrograde, and fall back into mere animality, into the nature-ground from which they were taken. Were such a conviction, or such a fear, to possess our actual human race, it would strike a deadening blow to all their lofty aims. The destruction which awaits the outcome of their energy is absolute, and there is no revival. Even the creations of man's Art, in Poetry, Literature, Painting, and Sculpture, must share the fate of his Architecture. And Music, when it has ceased to sound, has died out forever. All these have been founded upon a delusion. They only serve, now, to keep him busy, and save him from despair. All worship is needless. The Creator, whose whole work thus fails of any satisfying

result, falls below our respect. Entirely logical is the utterance of Omar Khayyam :

“ Man’s forgiveness—take.”

But that is too high a reach of magnanimity for most, who will not forgive. That one can sincerely say it proves him higher than the one he forgives.

We hurry away from this unconsoling philosophy and rest again upon the thesis of faith,—that Love has its origin and its perfect objects within the Divine Being itself; that all created work is to diversify its own fulness, and furnish compensation for its activity; that a plan has been laid, and slowly developed, to secure the perfect and satisfactory response,—such a love from the creature as is beyond all danger of retrogression; and this has been actually done in a concrete illustration, which thus has become the precedent and the germ of a development whose extent is still hidden from our knowledge. All history—physical, social, and individual—is only explainable as a preparation for this, its Final Cause. The foundations of our present cycle were laid in time, and a process begun and continued which is to issue in the perfected existence of man and the perfect commonwealth. This universe of our knowledge did not spring full-formed from the creative mind, as did the fabled Pallas from the brain of Zeus. The richness and fulness of the divine thought could not have been then comprehended. In its gradual evolution the Divine one has enabled us to trace the steps of the

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creative process, to appreciate the multitude of His thoughts, the beauty ever seeking higher forms, and His far-reaching purposes. The proofs of His beneficence are hereby exhibited, and the light they shed upon His ultimate design is darkened only by the shadows which man himself has cast. These shadows for a long time blinded men to the recognition of the divine love. But that it might at length be recognized by all those dwelling on the earth, and by all who had departed, or should depart from it, He gives at length a proof and exhibition of it, which confirms any suspicion of it that may have gone before. He exhibits the utmost extent of His own self-limitation, shows Himself capable of sacrifice, and shows also possible the utmost response of the creature. Were not Jesus Christ both God and man the universe would be a riddle still. The eternal love of the Eternal Son, through the activity of the Holy Spirit transcending the divine bound, transmutes itself into the responsive love of the created soul; and thus the ideal result is reached; and from this fructification a perfected universe may proceed, for which end the Holy Spirit energizes and brings to pass for the creature a form of life which is eternal.

The *a priori* argument that the First Principle of the universe is loving here receives its last increment, which fastens all that went before. This, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, this complete spiritual union of God and man, is the essential and distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, from which all else that it claims to be is to be interpreted. We

have nothing to do here with its historical evidences. Back of these lies this *a priori* argument, which no philosophy can vanquish.

In forming life-plans, therefore, and living a moral life, and in counselling others, the motive-spring of responsive love, which seeks for means to manifest itself, cannot afford to ignore this Christian doctrine. It must enter into a complete moral code. Yet what is possible without it in the way of moral rules must first be shown in order to see how this has been modified historically by Christian truth rightly understood, or wrongly understood and abused. We must first, then, contemplate the moral relation and life as historically first exhibited, and show how, by an ascending series, and a gradual purification, its motive-spring became truer, and purer, till it received its final rectification from the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX A

KANT

I HAD written a critique of the Kantian Ethics, but as it does not differ in its main argument from other critiques easily accessible, I have concluded not to insert it as a whole; but to give here some extracts from it, which may not be found in other critiques, and which have an important bearing upon the theoretical part of this treatise.

After Kant had succeeded in establishing the relativity of phenomena to intelligence, there was suggested in his mind the possible distinction between such phenomena and "things in themselves." This distinction his critics have maintained to be non-existent, seeing that the determination by spirit forms and categories has been necessary to make them "things" at all. Not otherwise than as something thus determined do material "things" come within the province of thought. But still these very relations are the relations between spirit and something that is not spirit. Kant may have seen this, but chose the wrong phrase to denominate it. It is not "things" nor "thing." But something still remains in and for thought, when these spirit-relations are abstracted. Yet this *residuum* is itself purely abstract, therefore characterless. It is nothing concrete, yet is as

needful as spirit itself to make the possibility of the concrete. From pure spirit alone can never in our thought be deduced any concrete. Pure spirit, or the Godhead, is, however, in a sense, the Absolute Concrete. But inasmuch as this is the source as well as the sum of all determinations, it must from this very definition be active and transcend itself as pure spirit. What else is needed to make this transcendence possible might be called the "thing in itself." Thus, though for our thought a pure abstraction, it is a necessary element of any concrete, and cannot be banished from thought. This is all that Kant's "*ding an sich*" amounts to. But he is equally astray who attempts to educe the concrete, as transcendent existence, from pure spirit only. As pure spirit itself only exists for thought by virtue of its immanent relations, so "things" only exist for thought by virtue of the determinations by spirit of the abstract *residuum* above referred to,—whence is their transcendence. Thus the Absolute First Principle, if it is to be used in thought to account for all existence, must be thought as pure spirit *plus* the Divine Doxa. The divine blessedness is not mere self-contemplation, but eternal activity, and for this the abstract Doxa is needful. The final cause of the divine activity is reciprocity,—love, to be brought to respond to love. And how wonderful the pathway through which it moves to reach it! All this preparation of stars and systems, of physical forces and elements, of vegetable and animal and human life, in order that a creature capable of responsive love might issue!

As still further elaboration of the above, approached by another pathway, we add as follows :

In a concrete presentation, wherefrom is a sensation

and a perception, there appears on analysis, the external stimulus, and the action of intelligence as relating. Since this is supplied a matter of course, it may be said, in some sense, to be "not in time." But the whole synthesis is an occurrence "in time." That which is said to be "not in time" is never active but as synthesizing somewhat, and "in time." That which *is*, is the synthesis. The whole, as a fact or event, is "in time." Succession, indeed, is not knowable but by virtue of that which is not succession. But this last, this permanent and abiding, has no concreteness for the human mind, except as in synthesis with that which is in succession or change. The Absolute consciousness, of which our consciousness is a partial manifestation, and the same in kind, must be thought as active, as ever synthesizing. Thus its acts, being changes to be known to other intelligences, must be "in time," and there must be that in the absolute existence of which time is possible. Thus the true objective must be "in time," in order to *exist*. Pure *being* is timeless, but *becoming* is a time procedure. Thus whatever is objective to the Divine Spirit can only *exist* "in time," and time is the form of the divine transcendent activity. It is impossible to think it as ever other than transcending itself. Here comes in the need, for a complete definition of the Absolute First Principle, that there shall be that in it which is capable of a synthetic *a priori* determination. Here again we have the abstract Divine Doxa, which is not anywhar alien from pure spirit, but is itself required that spirit may have transcendent as well as immanent relations. As pure spirit we think of God as only self-immanent, yet the Godhead must find within itself the possibility of the transcendent. When the transcendent comes to be, or is actual, then, in

the concrete thus constituted, God is immanent in another sense.

And now,—to apply this to our proper subject-matter,—unless the moral or loving principle is part of the definition of the absolute, and its central or unifying characteristic, there is no need or possibility of this transcendence, or any explanation of its meaning or idea. The aim of such transcendence, as before said, is reciprocity, and here we have the foundation of the *moral*.

Also,—in the rudimentary form of the appearance of the moral, viz.: the imagination of a state of things that should be, and a desire for it, or propulsion towards it (which imagination and desire are the explanation and the final cause of all wants and efforts), there is always, and ineradicable, in it the element of *physical* satisfaction. Thus the physical not only furnishes enjoyment, in endless variety, but it is indispensable for activity. The glorification of the physical, its fluency and readiness for new combinations and changes, must enter into the composition of the ideal commonwealth, the *world that should be*.

Thus God with His creatures must forever exist *in time*. Thus, too, the Divine Doxa is as exhaustless in its possibilities of change as the Divine Spirit is exhaustless in its possibilities of determination of the same. Hence the *moral* itself, if forever active, requires a glorified universe. We may note here the coincidence of this result of abstract thought with the intimations of the Christian Scriptures.

APPENDIX B

T. H. GREEN

JUST at this point in this treatise I think it wise to insert some notes made while I was reading the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, by Thomas Hill Green, as having a bearing upon and confirmation of what has gone before. The page references are to the edition of "1884. Oxford, The Clarendon Press."

Pp. 112-119. It is said that "a man's character is the result of himself and his circumstances." To which of these, "himself" or "his circumstances," belong any ante-natal determinations? If these determine his character absolutely, then he is not morally free, and cannot be thought as responsible. Yet he is conscious that he *is* responsible in spite of these alleged determinations, whether through heredity or environment. The truth is that these ante-natal determinations do not exhaust the definition of "himself." He brings with him into the world, besides these, the moral ideal itself, involved in his very mental structure. This always exists in outline, if not in the fuller picture, to be thereafter illumined and its details brought to light. With the awakening and developing consciousness, it furnishes alternatives, and hence a criterion. In degrees it coalesces with, or is found in opposition to, the determinations

from heredity and environment. The soul, as self or active, moves within these limits. All other ends or motives than the one suggested by the moral ideal are transient or perishable. This alone is perennial. It is the "absolute idea," energizing in the world for its highest aim; and human moral consciousness is the highest form of its manifestation.

Page 175. One may say that he avoids lower pleasures in order not to subject himself to self-reproach,—to maintain his "sense of dignity." We may ask here, whether the motive is not a negative one, *i. e.*, the avoidance of distress, and that likely to be permanent. But the inquiry arises,—why is this loss of self-respect painful? The reply is,—because he can no longer find place for himself in the imagination of the realized ideal.

Page 203. In one respect it is true that the "object" of moral endeavor is such that it is not possible for the man to give a sufficient account of it; yet in another sense it *is* possible, since imagination can picture the perfect state, towards which all conduct should be urged; and which involves the correspondence of all the elements of perfect existence, physical as well as mental and moral.

Page 206. As *form*, the good-will is *means*; as partial *content* of the full realization, it is *end*.

In one sense Kant's "categorical imperative" has no *content*, because no exactly defined particulars. Yet as comprising an indeterminate sum of duties it *has* content. But it is rather a play upon words to say "too much content."

Page 213. The subject's own good-will for another

will be fruitless unless that other have also a good will. This concord of wills is then an element of the absolute good. Each human being to whom we owe moral obligation is idiosyncratic, and in a particular stage of development. The moral obligation is,—so to treat him that he may take his place in the ultimate commonwealth. This is the practical question. But all such moral effort must be somewhat in doubt, and tentative, seeing that we do not fully understand what degree of the moral scale he has reached. Thus to formulate universal rules is impossible.

Page 248. Continuity of life, prolonged existence, and the satisfaction with a realized ideal, find their first concrete manifestation in the *family*. The instinct is deeply seated that this is more than an imaginative identification. Were this belief to be weakened the fountains of moral action would dry up. If there is no organic identification, or unity, the moral life is a delusion. Through this belief as to the family we are led to think of the tribe, the nation, as also organic, and at length to think of *humanity* as an organism. Unless, then, there is immortality, there is only continuity and no unity in the human race. The spur to moral action disappears.

Page 274. We cannot fault very consistently the limitations to the scope of moral effort of the Greek philosophers, since we ourselves are chargeable with fault the same in kind, as is shown by our moral advance, and the constant discovery of new duties. Nevertheless the plan of life, which alone gives meaning to moral duties, requires for its end something other than an abstract idea,—requires an ideal, the construction of

which is due to imagination, which is guided by all human feelings and sympathies. We wonder, then, that the ideal of a human brotherhood, and the adjustment of moral duties thence arising, did not enter into the mind of the Greek philosophers. It seems to us so easy to come at by naïve meditation. But in the Greek times the political conditions for the realization of an ideal of human brotherhood did not exist, nor did they think it possible that they could exist. Therefore, if such an imagination floated as a shadow into their mental movement, it was allowed to melt away as utterly impracticable. They contented themselves, therefore, with the contemplation of such an one as seemed feasible.

In the Roman Dominion, with its *quasi* universality, first dawned clearly upon the human mind the possibility of such a brotherhood realized. Its feasibility has been growing more and more distinct for imagination ever since. That out of the bosom of the most exclusive of all peoples, the Jews, should have arisen the One who first gave the conception distinct utterance,—the conception so alien from, or so much ahead of, anything in His own people, who drove even the expansive utterances of their prophets into the moulds of their own narrowness, is, to say the least, a notable event in the mental history of humankind.

Page 370. The right use of life for the loving soul, the truly *moral* one, may be given in the following series, which is, I think, *a priori* and in right logical consecution:

- (1) So to act that every other soul shall love.
- (2) That in order to this it must be capable of sacrifice.
- (3) That it should avail itself of the highest and most

powerful consideration by which it or another can be moved to sacrifice, and strengthened in sacrifice,—*i. e.*, by the conviction that God has made sacrifice.

(4) That, in order that other souls shall be moved thus, the conditions for intelligence should be supplied, whereby such may be made aware of this stimulus, and also be enabled to comprehend that this relation of love is the chief element of the moral ideal.

(5) That persuasives, coming from love, and intended and likely to awaken love, should be used.

(6) That all impediments, physical or social, to the accomplishment of these ends should be removed, but that wisely, and hence slowly, but with increasing speed,—*e. g.*, that physical want should be relieved, and made at length impossible; and that society should be so reformed that all temptations to anger, all envy and rivalry, and all needless display, will no longer exist, and that an estimate of the absolute instead of the relative worth of every human being may be the common possession.

(7) That all elevating and refining influences,—art, literature, science, philosophy,—should be supplied to clarify the ideal, that it may be kept before the minds of all in its attractiveness and beauty; and, in order to this, that it should be shown that all aspirations—physical, mental, and moral—will be met.

(8) That, taking into consideration the idiosyncrasy and the unique environment of each one, he be aided to form the right life-plan for himself, and to find the best modes of immediate activity to fill the measure of such plan.

(9) All which presupposes that negations and contradictions shall be weakened and made to cease. Particular rules will become more and more obvious as the loving

spirit widens and strengthens. Moral progress will occupy itself less and less with questions of individual duty, and more and more with those of political duty. Institutions will become introspective, and in their bosom be found lodged the chief responsibility for the amendment of mankind.

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